SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL LIFE OF MEDIEVAL INDIA DURING 16th -17th CENTURY AS DEPICTED IN THE ACCOUNTS OF FOREIGN TRAVELLERS

ABSTRACT

OF THE

THESIS

SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF

Doctor of Philosophy

IN

HISTORY

BY

SHAHANA SHEIKH

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

PROF. TARIQ AHMED

CENTRE OF ADVANCED STUDY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH - 202002 (INDIA)

2013

ABSTRACT

In this work an attempt has been made to study the socio-economic and cultural way of Indian life from the outlook of the foreign travellers during the 16th and 17th century.

The significance of 16^{th} and 17^{th} cannot be measured in the 'World History'. Even the period of these two centuries formed the most brilliant epochs in Indian History because of the maturity and downfall of Hindu Kingdom in the South during the first half of the sixteenth century. On another hand it witnessed the rise and growth of the Mughals to paramountcy in Northern India. The political turmoil of the first half of the sixteenth century was transitionary. Eventually, it gave way, to the stability that signified Akbar's reign; beginning with the second half of the sixteenth century.

The history of both the centuries in India has been a very interesting study-politically, socially, economically and culturally. The changes in all these spheres are not only momentous and marked but, also, revolutionary. The Turko-Afghan rule in the early medieval period, gave way to the establishment of the Mughal sway-but, it lacked a solid basis and was swept away-rather, too soon, by the Afghans under Sher Shah. But, it is to their credit that, the Mughals were able to strike back successfully, and restore their lost glory and dignity. Moreover, they were able to perpetrate their dynastic rule in this land for about two centuries.

The period concerned here clashes with the arrival of maximum nos. of foreign travellers in India. These travellers came from different nations were mostly Europeans. They came in different professions and time span leaving a wide and rich variety of source materials on Indian society and culture.

During the first half of the sixteenth-century travellers generally visited Southern India, especially the Malabar Coast and the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar. This was due to its geographical location. Study show that the important travellers who visited India during the sixteenth century were seven in numbers. Excluding Ralph Fitch, all the other six travellers confined their visit to Southern India only.

The seventeenth century in India saw the maturity of a very great empire in the East, the Mughal Empire. The period of a century which saw the reign of three most important Mughal rulers besides Akbar was very significant in the making of the Indian Medieval History.

A large number of foreign travellers started visiting the Mughal Empire from the very beginning of the seventeenth century. Mostly the travellers were Englishmen. Nevertheless, there were some important non-English travellers also in record in every reign that had put forward an interesting and detailed account for the period dealing with the socio-economic and cultural life of the period.

Though the original material for the study of Indian History during 16^{th} and 17^{th} centuries is vast and varied but the place occupied by the accounts of foreign travellers has its own importance. The significance can also be guessed from its profuse usage by the modern historians especially in corroborating a fact.

The present thesis entitled **"Socio-Economic and Cultural Life of Medieval India during 16^{th} and 17^{th} Century as Depicted in the Accounts of Foreign Travellers"** attempts to study those aspects of socio-economic and cultural life of Medieval India which were either not focused or not given due importance in the official or Persian chronicle.

Thus, the Socio-economic and Cultural life of Medieval India as depicted in the accounts of foreign travellers has been dealt in great detail in this thesis.

Almost every aspect of socio-economic and cultural life of medieval India had been taken by these travellers. Though there are lots of allegations on the travellers like they exaggerated the matter and depended mainly on bazaar gossips but there are some aspects of Indian History that came into light because of these foreigners like the issue of *'Anarkali'* etc. As they were unofficial sources they were not under pressure to eulogise the reigning monarch.

The most valuable information regarding the contemporary mode of socio-cultural life during the medieval period is to be found in the accounts of Barbosa, Pyard Laval, Nuniz, Paes, Fitch, Pelsaert, William Finch, Edward Terry, Coryat, Pietro Della Valle, Peter Mundy, Manrique Mandelso, Tavernier, Bernier, Manucci, Thevnot, Bowrey, Carre, Careri, Fryer, Marshall, Ovington and Hamilton. These travellers recorded facts about Indian social life with considerable objectivity.

Accounts of Pelsaert, Tavernier and other travellers throw valuable light on the trade and economy of India during 16th and 17th century without any restrictions. These foreign travellers had taken into account the economic conditions of different segments of society.

This work has been divided into five chapters excluding introduction and conclusion. A brief sketch of each chapter is as follows:

The first chapter deals with the biographical study of travellers who visited India during the period of 16th and 17th century. This chapter aims at giving a brief introduction of the travellers and the significance of their works.

It discusses the circumstances at their home that led them to travel to the East. Their country and profession to which they belonged played an important role in the way of writing travel narrative. An attempt is also made to study their family background to know their mental setup. Significance of their travel narrative depends on the source of collection of their data and also on the fact that which places they had visited in India.

The travellers suffered from certain handicaps by ignorance of the language, customs and institutions of the country. That is why certain factors have to be taken into consideration while accessing the value and the volume of their evidence; the areas of the country they visited and the time and duration of their visit; their linguistic equipment, their opportunities and personal experiences in relation to the court and the people; and above all their education, mental equipment or powers of observation and their prejudices.

The chapter is divided into four sub-chapters for making the chapter easy and interesting giving a clear knowledge of traveller's period-wise arrival, omitting all confusions to the readers.

The second chapter is an attempt to study the Indian society that was prevalent during the 16th and 17th century from the perspective of a foreigner. Looking the Indian society from the eyes of a foreigner is a different experience.

In this chapter the focus is to study the structure of the society during that period. Besides this an emphasis is made to study the similarities and differences that were prevalent between the Muslim and the Hindu societies such as their manner of taking food and drink, the way of wearing ornaments and dressing and the nature of

housing. The pastimes and amusements were similar for the whole period. In their household affairs, dresses, ornaments, arms, and in other details of their living, it was difficult to distinguish the one from the other. Most of the ceremonies performed by the Hindus and Muslims were same such as at the child-birth and beginning education were identical. A trial is also made to focus on the superstition and beliefs that was commonly prevalent in the society.

In the third chapter an attempt is made to analyse the Indian culture in all important aspects like; political and administrative organization, economic conditions, education, social and religious life etc. in medieval India. The role of aristocracy and nobility in enhancing the cultural development is studied. A trial is made to study the impact of living of higher class responsible in shaping the cultural life during the period; also the role played by the education-system, festivals and fasts on cultural life of the period in general. In spite of the Islamic pre-dominance a composite culture sprang up that was neither Islamic nor Hinduism in character is studied here.

The educational-system remained organized on the traditional lines. The Muslims and Hindus had a common system of education. They studied side by side in the same *maktabs* and *madarsas* under a common teacher. The primary education was given in these *madarsas*, attached with the mosques. *Persian* being the official language was learnt by most of the Hindus to get employed in mughal administration.

The Muslims learnt *Hindi* and some of them studied *Sanskrit* also. The *Vedas*, *upanishads* and several other Hindu religious and philosophical works were translated into *Persian*. Dara Shikoh and Jahanara Begum studied such works with great curiosity and interest. The Muslims also contributed in the enrichment of the *Hindi*, *Bengali* and *Punjabi* languages and literatures.

Fourth chapter tell us a good deal regarding the economic condition of India during the 16^{th} and 17^{th} century the travelogues. A trial is made in this chapter to get an exhaustive account of Indian products, industries, imports and exports, commercial codes and practices, transport system, banking and exchange etc. by weaving together numberless, scattered references in the travelogues and other sources.

In the economic sphere the account left by the travellers is of prime importance. They give ample and reliable information about agricultural crops, minerals, industries, trade and commerce. People lived mostly in self-sufficient villages forming

a unit. They produced all the necessities of life such as food and clothes for their own use. The cultivators grew different kinds of crops and the craftsmen manufactured all kinds of goods.

At the height of empire in the seventeenth century, the use of money, the cultivation of commercial crops and the production of manufactured goods had all become more widespread. The intensification of monetization and commercialization meant that even peasants were now enmeshed in economic relationships that extended considerably beyond their villages.

Commercial activity was not only intruding deeper and deeper into local agrarian economies, it was also operating in more expansive networks across the subcontinent as the Mughal Empire grew in size. Cash and credit, a wide range of goods and even people circulated on a much larger scale during the seventeenth century than in earlier times. As a consequence, all kinds of merchants, the small village moneylender, the urban shopkeeper, the long-distance trader, and the merchant-banker flourished.

Growing monetization and the expansion of economic networks were partly an outcome of the needs of the Mughal state. Revenues extracted from the hinterland typically in the form of cash, had to be dispatched to the capital, while funds for military campaigns or specialized goods had to be sent out to the provinces. This process could cumbersome, as in the early seventeenth century when Bengal's revenues were physically transported to the Imperial heartland in a convoy of bullock-carts. A better means of remitting money from one place to another was soon developed, the *hundi* or bill of exchange.

The relative ease of travel and exchange over long distances also stimulated the expansion of economic networks in the seventeenth century. Even bulky raw materials and foodstuffs were circulated from one end of the empire to another. Rice, sugar and oil from Bengal for instance were sent inlands along the Ganges River to Agra and also down the eastern coast to the Coromandel. In its return, Bengal imported large quantities of salt from Rajasthan. Artisans in certain areas came to depend largely on supplies from distant regions. Bengal was the source of most of the raw silk used by Gujarat's important silk textile industry, while Coromandel weavers

relied heavily on raw cotton from the western Deccan. High and luxury items like precious stones and finely worked metal ware were widely coveted and distributed.

People too had to travel to far-off places to procure goods for business deals and needed safe accommodations while away from their homes. A large city like Agra had as many as sixty rest-houses or *serais* for travellers.

It is significant to note that industries were in a highly flourishing state in those days. The manufacture of textiles was the biggest industry in the country. Besides textiles, metallurgy, diamond cutting and the saltpeter, ceramics reached the highest stage of artistic development. Indian manufactured goods were exported to Western Asia and to the countries of Europe, and it was the prospect of a lucrative trade in these goods that attracted the European merchants to India during this period. Imports were almost negligible as India was self-sufficient.

During early sixteenth-century the economy the Vijayanagara also flourished due to the resultant agrarian surplus along with the development of industry. Travellers describe the capital of Vijayanagara as the *'best provided city in the world'*. The Vijayanagara rulers prompted mining of metals and diamonds, built craft-guilds and encouraged their subjects to produce the best of fabrics and perfumes. They patronized Hindu religion and made extensive developments in the field of architecture through the construction of impressive temples and monuments. With the battle of *Talikota* in 1564 A.D., the glory of Vijayanagara finally came to an end.

Fifth and the last chapter aim at picturising the status of women in general from the view-point of a visitor. The curiosity of western males to know about the eastern beauties is a very interesting study that too when the access was almost impossible.

During the sixteenth and the seventeenth century the condition of women was not much different as it prevailed in early medieval period but with a minor alteration only. The representation of woman in every aspect of life with issues related to them is studied in this chapter. An interesting contrast has been drawn by our travellers when they recorded the freedom enjoyed by the women in South India that lowered the status and position of women during the period.

The royal ladies enjoyed special privileges and were held in high esteem. They were also given proper honour and respect. Some of them kept themselves involved in

commercial activities, court politics and even in state welfare works. The royal ladies held this place because of their personal achievements and ability sometimes. The position of the women of the nobility was just the copy of the royalty. They recorded the better economic position of Muslim women as compared to their Hindu sisters in Mughal India.

In spite of the many privileges enjoyed by the ladies of the aristocratic and nobility class their life was also not free from some of the evil practices in the society like *purdah* and polygamy. *Purdah* or veiling of women was a common practice among the Muslims, and it was also adopted by Hindu women after the advent of the Muslims. This system was particularly prevalent among affluent families of both communities, as it came to be associated as an elitist practice. In fact *purdah* was the most strictly observed by the royal ladies and higher class women. Polygamy was common among the Muslims while Hindus mostly practiced monogamy; but Hindu rulers were an exception to this rule.

On the other hand, the foreign travellers observed the social custom and practices that had a direct bearing on the place of middle-class and common women that relegated them (women) to the background. The social malpractices like the *child-marriage*, infanticide, *sati*, *jauhar*, dowry, divorce, remarriage, female slavery that included concubinage and dancing girls are fearlessly revealed in the travelogues. Many social reforms were undertaken such as the abolition of *child-marriage* and *sati* for raising the status of women in society.

In south India women enjoyed a better position as compared to their northern counterparts. They participated keenly in social, political and literary activities of the time. There were also women wrestlers, astrologers and clerks who were well-educated and experienced in state business.

Yet, the Vijayanagar society was not free from the social evils of child-marriage, the dowry system and the frequent practice of *sati*. Polygamy was not uncommon and even visits to brothels were considered to be fairly normal, unattached with any social stigma. Sometimes women of pleasure accompanied the army and accomplished courtesans often enjoyed special favours from the kings.

The critical study of material provided by the foreign travellers leads to the conclusion that a common civilization sprang up in the greater part of the country

during the 16th and 17th centuries due to the establishment of a strong central government under the Mughals. This peaceful atmosphere enabled the people to evolve a common outlook upon life which brought about homogeneity in social and spiritual ideals and in art and literature.

The affluent sections of society were rich and prosperous from their income from agriculture, trade and manufacture. The standard of living of common masses was low but they were contended as foodstuffs and other basic needs were available in abundance; also at very cheap prices. The conditions of common masses were not so bad except during dislocation either caused by war or by some natural calamity.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL LIFE OF MEDIEVAL INDIA DURING 16th -17th CENTURY AS DEPICTED IN THE ACCOUNTS OF FOREIGN TRAVELLERS

THESIS

SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF

Doctor of Philosophy

IN

HISTORY

BY

SHAHANA SHEIKH

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

PROF. TARIQ AHMED

CENTRE OF ADVANCED STUDY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH - 202002 (INDIA)

2013

Dedicated

To my

Loving Parents

CENTRE OF ADVANCED STUDY

Department of History
Aligarh Muslim University
Aligarh-202 002

Dated: 3rd December, 2013

TARIQ AHMED
Professor

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis, ***"Socio-Economic and Cultural Life of Medieval India During 16th-17th Century as Depicted in the Accounts of Foreign Travellers",*** by Ms. **Shahana Sheikh** is her own original work. I consider it is suitable for submission to the examiners and for the award of the **Ph.D. Degree**.

(Prof. Tariq Ahmed)
Supervisor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is my prime duty to acknowledge the kindness of my teacher, friends and well-wishers with whose help and advice I was able to complete this work.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my deep sense of gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Tariq Ahmed, Chairman and Coordinator, Centre of Advanced Study, Dept. of History, AMU, Aligarh. It is under his guidance I was able to complete my work only. Despite busy schedule he was always generous with his time and knowledge. I consider myself immensely fortunate in having someone so kind and supportive as my supervisor.

I am also thankful to all the research fellows and friends for their endearing encouragement and constant support from the department. I would like to mention here the name of some of my friends who helped me in one or another way - Fatima Maryam, Deepti Malan, Deepti Sharma and Zeenat Zahoor. My special thanks are to Moin Ahmed and to Munim bhai for providing me with materials on my topic. I cannot forget to mention the name of my respected teacher - Prof. R.A. Alvi, who helped me in the initial phase of my research. I am also thankful to Mr. Faiz Habib for helping me with the maps used in my work.

I wish to thank (MANF) UGC for providing financial assistance during the period of my study. I would also like to put on record my thanks to the staff of the following libraries for allowing me access to the sources and secondary works concerning my work: Centre of Advanced Study, Department of History (AMU), Maulana Azad Library (AMU), and National Archives of India (New Delhi).

My family has been a constant source of inspiration. I thank my three brothers - S. M. Danish, S. M. Rashid and S. M. Shariq, for their love, affection and moral support. I am thankful to my father-in-law, Jnb. Jalal Ahmad Siddiqi and mother-in-law, Mrs. Raushan Ara for their love and support. I am indebted to my husband, Mr. Nadeem Ahmad for co-operating with me in every possible way to complete this

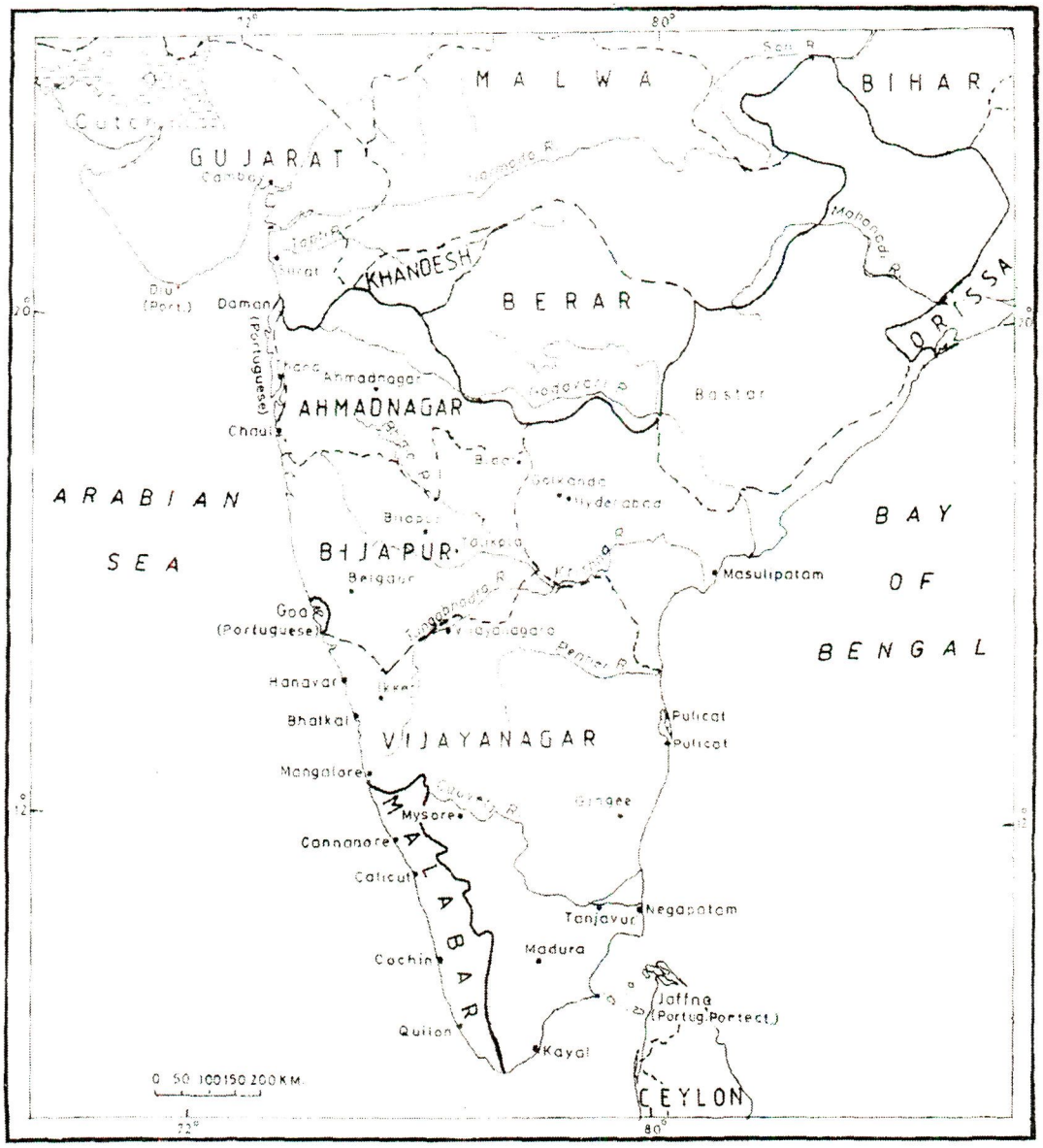
work. All the typing is done by my youngest brother, S.M. Shariq, for which I am indebted to him. Any textual errors that remain are not likely to be his.

Shahana Sheikh
(SHAHANA SHEIKH)

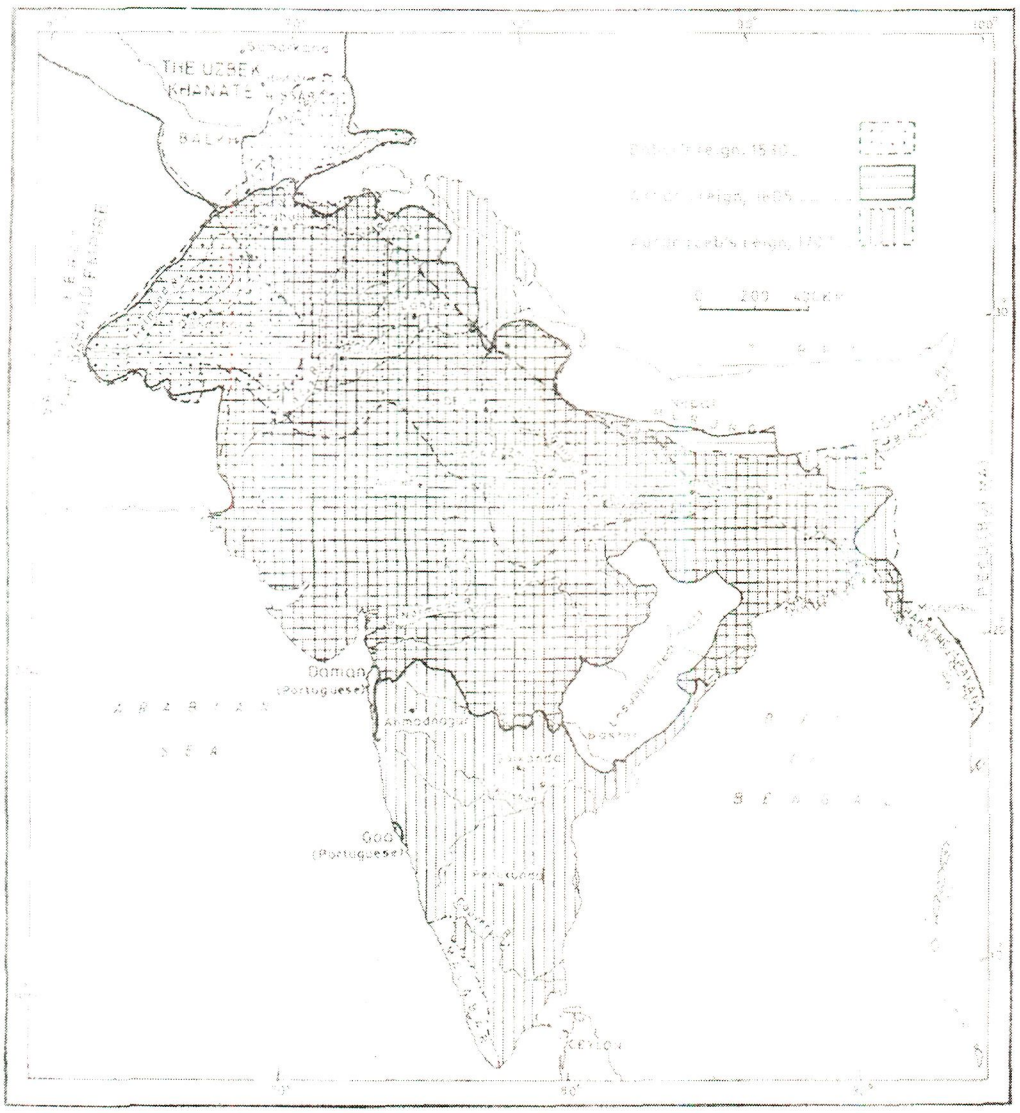
Abbreviations

Ain.	*Ain-i-Akbari*
A.N.	*AkbarNama*
Anwar	*Anwar-i-Suhaili*
B. N.	*Babur Nama*
Bernier	*Travels in the Mogul Empire, 1656-68.*
Bowrey	*A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal, 1669-1679.*
Fryer	*A New Account of East India and Persia Being Nine Years' 1672-81.*
IHR	*Indian Historical Review*
J.A.S.B.	*Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*
Manucci	*Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India 1653-1708.*
Monserrate	*Mongolicae legationis Commentarius*
PIHC	*Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*
Pelsaert	*The Remonstrantie*
Purchas	*Hakluyt Posthumus or Purchas his Pilgrimes, Contayning A History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and Others.*

Sewell	*A Forgotten Empire*
Tavernier	*Travels In India*
Tu	*Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*
zuk	



Map 1: ***South India In The Sixteenth Century***



Map 2: ***The Mughal***

Empire

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

A travelogue or an itinerary is a travel writing of literary value. It typically records the experiences of an author touring a place for the pleasure of travel.

In post-classical times Muslims and Chinese dominated in travel writing but Europeans took the central stage in travel and travel writing during the early modern era (From 1500-1800 A.D.). Europeans ventured to the distant corners of the globe and European printing presses churned out thousands of travel accounts that described foreign land and peoples.

The volume of travel literature was so great that several editors, including Giambattista, Ramusio, Richard Hakluyt, Theodore de Bry and Samuel Purchas assembled numerous travel accounts and made them available in published collections.

Over the centuries India has always been the object of foreign interest which has led scholars, conquerors missionaries, journalists and travellers to venture descriptions and classifications. Foreign attempts at depicting the sub-continent have greatly influenced people imaginaries, causing the birth of a stereotypical vision of the country which somehow has survived until today, both in the West where those accounts were produced and in India itself.

India's classical image was established by travellers from outside - those remarkable people who ventured to remote lands in the garb of merchants, ambassadors, rulers, chaplains, pioneers, administrators, soldiers, artists, writer, poets, philosophers, missionaries, mariners, scholars, conquerors, journalists, physician, jeweler etc. and recorded the contemporary events, circumstances and conditions– political, social, economic, cultural and administrative, topographical details, ideas and concepts, trade, flora and fauna, behavior and etiquette and many other aspects of life in India which are valuable for understanding the socio-cultural as well as economic life of the time. They conveyed back impressions to their countrymen through lively tales, anecdotes and travel journals. These travellers came from far and

near. They were from England, Portugal, Italy, France, Germany, Holland, Russia, Persia, Turkey, Tibet and the Arab countries.

The significance of 16th and 17th can't be measured in the World History. Even the period of these two centuries formed the most brilliant epochs in Indian History because of the maturity and downfall of Hindu Kingdom in the South during the first half of the sixteenth century. On another hand it witnessed the rise and growth of the Mughals to paramountcy in Northern India. The political turmoil of the first half of the sixteenth century was transitionary. Eventually, it gave way, to the stability that signified Akbar's reign; beginning with the second half of the sixteenth century.

The history of both the centuries in India has been a very interesting study-politically, socially, economically and culturally. The changes in all these spheres are not only momentus and marked but, also, revolutionary. The Turko-Afghan rule in the early medieval period, gave way to the establishment of the Mughal sway-but, it lacked a solid basis and was swept away-rather, too soon, by the Afghans under Sher Shah. But, it is to their credit that, the Mughals were able to strike back successfully, and restore their lost glory and dignity. Moreover, they were able to perpetrate their dynastic rule in this land for about two centuries.

During the first half of the sixteenth century travellers generally visited Southern India, especially the Malabar Coast and the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar. This was due to its geographical location. South India lies in the peninsular Deccan Plateau and is bounded by the Arabian Sea in the west, the Indian Ocean in the south and the Bay of Bengal in the east. The geography of the region is diverse, encompassing two mountain ranges, the Western and Eastern Ghats, and a plateau heartland. A number of dynastic kingdoms ruled over parts of South India during its glorious history.

Father Stephen, Ralph Fitch and John Mildenhall were the only exception who visited the northern India during the 16th century. Only Ralph Fitch had given the account of Mughal Empire to some extent whereas the other two had just fulfilled the formality of being travellers as Ft. Stephen was the traveller only in name and Mildenhall's account was mostly personal in nature.

Besides, three missions were also sent to Akbar's court starting in 1580. Father Monserrate had pictured a good account at the Akbar's court. Father Jurric had compiled all the three missions sent at the Akbar's court. Thus, forms a very good and first hand source for the Akbar's reign from the perspective of an outsider.

Study show that the important travellers who visited India during the sixteenth century were seven in numbers. Excluding Ralph Fitch, all the other six travellers confined their visit to Southern India only.

The seventeenth century in India saw the maturity of a very great empire in the East, the Mughal Empire. The period of a century which saw the reign of three most important Mughal rulers besides Akbar was very significant in the making of the Indian Medieval History.

A large number of foreign travellers started visiting the Mughal Empire from the very beginning of the seventeenth century. Mostly the travellers were Englishmen. Nevertheless, there were some important non-English travellers also in record in every reign that had put forward an interesting and detailed account for the period dealing with the socio-economic and cultural life of the period. Pyard De Laval was the only Frenchman who visited South India during the seventeenth century.

Although it is very difficult to estimate the accurate number of foreign travellers who visited India but an attempt is made in Appendix- 1 to provide with the name of well-known tavellers who visited India during the period under study with their time period and country name to make the picture clearer.

English travellers outnumbered the other European travellers for the whole period of one century but it is clear that during the reign of Shahjahan the other European travellers were much more as compared to the English and even more significant than the Englishmen. Peter Mundy was the only significant English traveller for the reign of Shahjahan. Besides, Henry Lord and Herbert also contributed in the travel narrative but insignificantly.

Though the original material for the study of Indian History during 16^{th} and 17^{th} centuries is vast and varied but the place occupied by the accounts of foreign travellers has its own importance. The significance can also be guessed from its profuse usage by the modern historians especially in corroborating a fact.

The present thesis entitled **"Socio-Economic and Cultural Life of Medieval India during 16^{th} and 17^{th} Century as Depicted in the Accounts of Foreign**

Travellers" attempts to study those aspects of socio-economic and cultural life of Medieval India which were either not focused or not given due importance in the official or Persian chronicle.

Thus the Socio-economic and Cultural life of Medieval India as depicted in the accounts of foreign travellers has been dealt in great detail in this thesis.

Almost every aspect of socio-economic and cultural life of medieval India had been taken by these travellers. Though there are lots of allegations on the travellers like they exaggerated the matter and depended mainly on bazaar gossips but there are some aspects of Indian History that came into light because of these foreigners like the issue of *'Anarkali'* etc. As they were unofficial sources they were not under pressure to eulogise the reigning monarch.

The most valuable information regarding the contemporary mode of socio-cultural life during the medieval period is to be found in the accounts of Barbosa, Pyard Laval, Nuniz, Paes, Fitch, Pelsaert, William Finch, Edward Terry, Coryat, Pietro Della Valle, Peter Mundy, Manrique Mandelso, Tavernier, Bernier, Manucci, Thevnot, Bowrey, Carre, Careri, Fryer, Marshall, Ovington and Hamilton. These travellers recorded facts about Indian social life with considerable objectivity.

Accounts of Pelsaert, Tavernier and other travellers throw valuable light on the trade and economy of India during 16^{th} and 17^{th} century without any restrictions. These foreign travellers had taken into account the economic conditions of different segments of society.

Objectives of the Study

This thesis proposes to study the following aspects and questions-

1. Why individuals have travelled beyond their own Societies?
2. What were the conditions that accelerated the arrival of foreign visitors on Indian Sub-continent?
3. What was the significance of the 16^{th} and 17^{th} century in world history?
4. What was the political significance of 16^{th} and 17^{th} century in medieval Indian history?

5. Why most of the travellers visited South India before the 17th century? Who were the travellers to visit South India during the period under study? What was the place visited generally in South India?
6. Why the travellers during the period under study were generally Europeans? Who were the non-European travellers to visit India during the period under study? Under whose reign they visited?
7. Why a bulk of travellers visited northern India during the 17th century? Name of the places visited by foreigners in Northern India.
8. Providing period-wise as well as country-wise list of all the travellers who visited during the period under study in the form of an appendix.
9. A brief biography of all the foreigners who visited during the period under study is provided to enhance the knowledge of even an amateur historian.
10. How the Indian society was depicted by the foreign visitors? What the socio-economic and cultural life was as depicted in the accounts of the foreigners?
11. What was the structure of society? Who were at the apex of hierarchy? Was there any difference in the social structure of Northern India and Southern India as depicted in the travelogue?
12. What were the social evils that attracted their (foreigners) attention during the period under study? Were all the evils related with the women?
13. How the women were represented in the travelogues? What was the status and position of Indian women during the period under review?

The thesis has been divided into five chapters.

Chapter-I

A BRIEF STUDY OF THE FOREIGN TRAVELLERS WHO VISITED MEDIEVAL INDIA DURING 16th AND 17th CENTURY

The first chapter deals with the biographical study of travellers who visited India during the period of 16th and 17th century. This chapter aims at giving a brief introduction of the travellers and the significance of their works.

It discusses the circumstances at their home that led them to travel to the East. Their country and profession to which they belonged played an important role in the way of writing travel narrative. An attempt is also made to study their family background to know their mental setup. Significance of their travel narrative depends on the source of collection of their data and also on the fact that which places they had visited in India.

The travellers suffered from certain handicaps by ignorance of the language, customs and institutions of the country. That is why certain factors have to be taken into consideration while accessing the value and the volume of their evidence; the areas of the country they visited and the time and duration of their visit; their linguistic equipment, their opportunities and personal experiences in relation to the court and the people; and above all their education, mental equipment or powers of observation and their prejudices.

The chapter is divided into four sub-chapters for making the chapter easy and interesting giving a clear knowledge of traveller's period-wise omitting all confusions to readers.

Chapter-II

SOCIETY OF 16TH AND 17TH CENTURY AS DEPICTED IN THE ACCOUNTS OF FOREIGN TRAVELLERS

The chapter is an attempt to study the Indian society that was prevalent during the 16th and 17th century from the perspective of a foreigner. Looking the Indian society from the eyes of a foreigner is a different experience. In this chapter the focus is to study the structure of the society during that period. Besides this an emphasis is made to study the similarities and differences that were prevalent between the Muslim and the Hindu societies such as their manner of taking food and drink, the way of wearing ornaments and dressing and the nature of housing. A trial is also made to focus on the superstition and beliefs that was commonly prevalent in the society.

Chapter-III

CULTURAL LIFE IN THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURY BY FOREIGN TRAVELLERS

A study is laid to know the cultural life that was prevalent from the early sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century more specifically that are covered in the travelogues of the period. An attempt is made to analyse the Indian culture in all important aspects like; political and administrative organization, economic conditions, education, social and religious life etc. in medieval India. What was the role of aristocracy and nobility in enhancing the cultural development? A trial is made to study the impact of living of higher class responsible in shaping the cultural life during the period. Also the role played by the education-system, festivals and fasts on cultural life of the period in general. In spite of the Islamic pre-dominance a composite culture sprang up that was neither Islamic nor Hinduism in character is studied here.

Chapter-IV

ECONOMIC LIFE AS DEPICTED BY THE FOREIGN TRAVELLERS OF 16TH AND 17TH CENTURY

Regarding the economic condition of India during the 16th and 17th century the travelogues tell us a good deal. A trial is made in this chapter to get an exhaustive account of Indian products, industries, imports and exports, commercial codes and practices, methods of purchase and sale, banking and exchange, currency weights, measures, custom duties, tolls and transportation, etc. by weaving together numberless, scattered references in the travelogues and other sources.

Chapter-V

REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN FOREIGN TRAVELLER'S ACCOUNT

This chapter aims at picturing the status of women in general from the view-point of a visitor. The curiosity of western males to know about the eastern beauties is a very interesting study that too when the access was almost impossible. Issues related to gender are taken up here. The representation of woman in all the aspects of life is

studied. However, an interesting contrast has been drawn by our travellers when they recorded the freedom enjoyed by the women in South India that lowered the status and position of women during the period. Not only this, they had also laid down the exalted positions of the women belonging to royalty and nobility. They recorded the better economic position of Muslim women as compared to their Hindu sisters in Mughal India.

Review of the Primary Source Material

The present study is based on the study of travelogues that forms an important primary source material for Medieval Indian History. The original material for the study of socio-economic and cultural aspect of Indian History is vast and varied but my focus is mainly on the personal narratives of the travellers who visited our country during 16th and 17th century.

We are fortunate to possess most of these in published form today. Many narratives have been published by the Hakluyt Society which depicts the lifestyle, customs, social practices and religious beliefs etc. of the people in different parts of the country and are a valuable source material for study of contemporary history.

The Factory records of various trading companies operating in India are of immense importance as the source material for the social life of 17th century. They include "Letter Book of the East India Company, Letters received from its servants and Calendar of the Court, Minutes of the Company". These series cover the period between 1600 and 1708 and were collected by William Foster. Letters received by the East India Company from its servants in the East, based on the India Office records and published in six volumes are letters received during 1602-17. The English Factories in India in thirteen volumes edited by William Foster cover period from 1618 to 1669 A.D.

Though they deal little with society but, being official records, their information may be taken as true and trustworthy. These throw important light on the administration and economic life of the country. The letters are full of personal experiences. They also deal with the condition of artisans, labourers, merchants and brokers. They are invaluable for an economic history of India during the early years of 17th century.

A number of contemporary works were written on current events as well as the social, economic and cultural trends followed by the royalty and nobility during the Mughal era. In this thesis, some important translated Persian sources are used for corroborating the facts sometimes. These works are-

The *Baburnama*, also known as the *Tuzuk-i-Baburi* or the *Memoirs of Babur*, constitute a firsthand account for Babur's own career and his times. It describes the land, with its geography, trade and industry in evocative tones. Emperor Babur's daughter, Gulbadan Begum also wrote an account of Humayun's life, the *Ahval-i-Humayun Badshah* or the *Humayun Nama*. It reflects the condition, circumstances or situations; and her unique account of the everyday lives of the royal family presents many aspects of Mughal life about which very little is known from other sources. The important feature of her account is that it reflects a feminist perspective.

Akbarnama was the first official history of the Mughal court. Its official and equally voluminous appendix, the *Ain-i-Akbari* (an administrative and statistical record of Akbar's government), was written by Abul Fazl. It is useful for studying the household administration, court ceremonies, coinage, salaries and ranks, literary and intellectual life.

Abdul Qadir Badauni's three volume *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* is also considered to be a comprehensive account of Muslim rule in India from the Ghaznavids to Akbar. Badauni was a great critic of Akbar's policies. His text is useful for verifying facts portrayed by Abul Fazl and also gives a fuller picture of the political and religious environment of the time. The *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* written by Nizamuddin Ahmed offers a more objective account of Akbar's reign and is therefore considered to be one of the most reliable sources. Yet another text on the period, the *Tarikh-i-Akbar Shahi* of Muhammad Arif Qandhari presents a general survey of Muslim rule in India from Mahmud of Ghazni to the middle of the sixteenth century.

The *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* which is the autobiography of Jahangir is an important source for the period. For the Shahjahan's reign Abdul Hamid Lahori's *Padshah Nama* is a comprehensive account of the emperor's life and times. Inayat Khan's *Shahjahan Nama* is another biography that archives Shahjahan's life till his thirtieth year.

Emperor Aurangzeb's rule has been compiled by his court historiographer. Mirza Muhammad Kazim, in the *Alamgir Nama*. Khafi Khan's *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab* also covers Aurangzeb's lifetime. The *Maasir-i-Alamgiri* of Muhammad Saqi Mustaid Khan is based on the official accounts of Aurangzeb's rule. covers a major part of his reign: while Shahnawaz Khan's *Maasir-ul-Umara* and Ishwardas Nagauri's *Fatuhat-i-Alamgiri* give more detailed accounts of Aurangzeb's reign.

The above mentioned sources are easily accessible in Maulana Azad Library, Seminar Library of History Deptt., A.M.U., Aligarh and National Archives of India Library, New Delhi.

Review of the Secondary Sources

There is no scarcity of scholarly studies on the socio-economic and cultural aspect of Indian History for the period under review. The present thesis as proposes to study the travellers account and the depiction of the socio-economic and cultural life of Indians by the foreign visitors during the 16th and 17th century for which the work of M.A. Ansari's, *'European Travels under the Mughals'* and Meera Nanda's entitled *'European Travel Accounts During the Reigns of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb'* is an informative book but focuses on the aspect of Indian life for the period of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb only. Joan-Pau Rubies work entitled *'Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India through European Eyes, 1250-1625'* is a scholarly and very interesting study regarding the travellers who visited the Southern India. Other works available on the socio-economic and cultural life of the South India are also used.

There are some of very important works that deal with the biography of the foreign travellers like Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam entitled *'Indo-Persian travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400-1800'*. I find chapter- 3 and chapter- 4 in the above work as useful for my topic that gives good information regarding life and Indian visit of the Turkish admiral Sidi Reis and Mahmud Wali Balkhi.

Other related important works are R.C. Prasad's, *'Early English Travellers in India'*, E.F. Oaten's, *'European Travellers in India'*, J.T. Wheeler's, *'European Travellers in India'*, R. Nath's, *'India as seen by William Finch'*, M.H. Fisher's, *'Vision of Mughal India: An Anthology of European Travel Writing'*, Paul Kegaum's, *'European Travellers in India during 15th, 16th and 17th Centuries'*, P.K. Nayar's, *The*

"Discourse of Difficulty ". English Writing and India, 1000-1720. M.L. Pratt's, *'Imperial Eyes, Travel Writing and Transculturation'*. K. Teltcher's, 'India Inscribed, *'European and British Writing on India, 1600-1800'*, H.K. Kaul's. *'Travellers' India: An Anthology'*, etc.

Modern work relied heavily on the archives of the East India Company ('Factory Records') and the accounts of European travellers. Therefore, I have tried to base my study primarily on the published travel narratives left by the foreign visitors whose details are discussed to some extent in the first chapter. Other sources are also used to help in corroborating the facts.

Like all other historical documents, travel accounts are highly problematic source of information. There are numerous reasons why it is impossible to accept the testimony of travel accounts of face value. Sometimes these travellers did not notice or were not able to notice, or perhaps were not even permitted to certain aspects of the societies they visited. Sometimes they were sloppy or did not take the trouble to investigate carefully the society, culture and economy they visited. Sometimes they felt such a deep commitment to their own societies that they tendentiously misinterpreted or mispresented the lands they visited. Occasionally they took as their principle interest the critique of their own societies. So they exaggerated the virtues of the lands they visited. To some greater or lesser extent all travel accounts reflect the biases, prejudices and interests of their author.

So this is the job of a historian to critically evaluate the information provided by the travelogues because whereas they are sometimes serve as a very good and first hand historical material but many times they are not free from angularities which have resulted from an uncritical acceptance of the testimony of the contemporary travellers.

It is thus the purpose of my thesis to critically analyse the information provided by the foreign travellers account to highlight the various aspects of Socio-Economic and Cultural life of medieval India during 16^{th} and 17^{th} century.

CHAPTER – I

CHAPTER-I

A Brief Study of the Foreign Travellers Who Visited Medieval India during 16th and 17th Century.

The richness variety and profusion of the accounts of the foreign travellers who visited India adds new dimensions to the story of life and civilization by filling up the wide lacunae in the missing links of the narration of facts, supplement vital information to cover essential facets of the social and cultural history and lends fullness of life in Medieval India during the sixteenth and the seventeenth century.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had felt the tremendous arrival of foreign travellers on Indian sub-continent. The phenomenon of their arrival was not an uncommon one since ancient times in Indian history. But their arrival was not as regular or continuous as in sixteenth century or in horde as in the seventeenth century.

The reason is obvious to this increase in the influx of foreign travellers in India which is given by many modern historians as well. H.K. Kaul writes, *"With Vasco da Gama's opening of Cape route in 1498, European contacts with India became more regular; numerous travel accounts and scholarly works were produced and, by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the proliferation of guidebooks on India reflects the existence of much travelling from Europe".*[1]

After the Vasco da Gama's landing at Calicut in 1498, the half-century that followed saw the rise of the Portuguese power which was extended throughout the East Indies.[2] They started occupying almost every place of importance to the Indian trade between Aden and Formosa gradually. Those places were Malacca, Mangalore, Surat, all the Gujarat ports, Muscat, Ormuz, Daman, Calicut, Cochin, most of Ceylon, Negapatam and Thatta on the Indus, Masulipatam, Macao, most of the Coromandel and Bengal ports.[3]

---

[1] Kaul, H.K., *Travellers' India: An Anthology*, Delhi, 1980, p. xxx.
[2] Oaten, E. F., *European Travellers in India during the Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Lucknow, 1974, p. 35.
[3] *Ibid.*

A number of travellers who visited the Southern India, especially the Malabar Coast and the Kingdom of Vijayanagara in the period between 1500-1580 A.D. were from Portugal and Italy namely Varthema, Barbosa, Paes, Nuniz and Cesare Federici.

Foreign Travellers of the Sixteenth Century

Ludovico Di Varthema of Bologna was an Italian wanderer whose travel date is 1502-1508.[4] Nothing much is known about his life before his travel. Even his exact birthplace cannot be traced. Some references to his earlier life can be taken from his conversation in his text which too is not clear. His travel places in India include the Indian coasts as far as Pulicat near Madras on the eastern part of it including Ceylon. From Pulicat he went across the Bay of Bengal. He starts for India on 4th March, 1504 and reached Diu, he leaves India for Europe.

Varthema's account on Calicut is in detail as compared to other town of India. To Varthema, Calicut was the chief town in all India. He visited Calicut two times. In 1505 and 1506, he worked about eighteen months in the capacity of a factor (trade agent). He writes about *Navratra Festival* at the *Hindu New Year* in the neighborhood of Calicut. He notices the haughty aloofness of both *Brahman* and *Nairs* from the "*untouchable*" lower classes of society and the food and manner adopted by the different castes in society. He notes the well known matriarchal system of inheritance and the law of inheritance prevalent at Calicut in some detail.

Touching the economic life during his travel Varthema gives a good account of "bankers and money changer" of Calicut. The various kinds of boats by names in various languages other than the local vernacular, Malayalam, are noted at Calicut. Varthema's account of Vijayanagar winds up with a good description of the currency. Varthema's account is straightforward and often too brief. Further obvious mistakes, they are wonderfully accurate.

Generally speaking he had given a good brief picture of society, economy and culture of southern India including the Vijayanagara Empire in the early 16th century

[4] Varthema, Ludovico Di, *The Itinerary of Ludovico Di Varthema of Bologna from 1502 to 1508*, English tr. John Winter Jones, 1863, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi (rpt. 1997), p. v.

and historically significant for Medieval Indian History as it preceded the accounts of Barbosa and other Portuguese travellers on their proceedings in India and the East.

Itinerario de Ludovico dis Varthema Bologanese was first published in Italian at Rome in 1510. In 1511, it was published in Latin and from Latin into Elizabethan English by Richard Eden in 1577. John Winter Jones translated it into English in 1863 from the original Italian edition of 1510. In the same year it was published for the Hakluyt Society by the great Arabic scholar, G.P. Badger after editing it under the title of *"The Itinerary of Ludovico di Varthema of Bologna from 1502-1508"*. Varthema acquaints in with the Great War between Yusuf Adil Shah of Bijapur and King Narsimha Raya.

Duarte Barbosa was born in Lisbon to Diogo Barbosa in the latter part of the fifteenth century and was in the service of the Portuguese Government from 1500-1517.[5] Barbosa came to India in 1500 with his uncle Goncalo Gil Barbosa who was in the fleet of Pedro Alvarez Cabral. In 1503, Barbosa was at Cannor. He died on the 1st of May, 1521.[6]

Barbosa's Indian career includes his visit to the Hindu Kingdom of Vijayanagara, the Malabar Kingdom, Kingdom of Gujarat, the Bahmani Kingdom, and the East Coast of the Indian Peninsula from Coromandel to Bengal.

The Malabar attracted his interest the most which can be attributed to his long residence and acquaintance with the language of the people of Malabar. He gives a full and accurate description of the inhabitants of Malabar, their customs and elaborate caste-system and the accuracy can be tested with that still existed almost unaltered. He describes the *sati*, *hook-swinging* and other ceremonies from his personal observation. He also notes the principle towns and seaports.

The significance of his account is based on his personal acquaintances, truthfulness and careful observations that make it more accurate and elaborate than the other travellers of the time. The value of Barbosa's work is principally geographical and ethnographical.

---

[5] Barbosa, Duarte, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, English tr. and ed. Mansel Longworth Dames, 1918-21, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi (rpt. 1989), Vol. I, p. xxxiii.

[6] *Ibid.* p. xlix.

Duart's work was included in Ramusio's Italian work entitled *Navigationie Viaggi*, first published from Venice in 1563.[7] A Portuguese manuscript, found at Lisbon, was published in 1813. The Spanish version of the MSS. exists in Barcelona and Munich.

The first English translation was made by Lord Stanley of Alderley from the Spanish MS. and published by Hakluyt Society in 1865 under the title of. *'The Coasts of East Africa and Malabar'*.[8] The second English translation was made from the Portuguese text which had been first published in 1812 by the Royal Academy of Sciences of Lisbon in 2 vols. later on edited and annotated by Mansel Longworth Dames under the title of, *'The Book of Duarte Barbosa'* in 2 vols. in 1918.

The account of Barbosa is important not only for his observation on trade and political events during a transitional period but also for throwing up ethnological details of the times.

Domingo Paes (1520-1522) and Fernao Nuniz (1535-37) were important Portuguese travellers who had visited the Vijayanagara Empire during the rule of Tuluva dynasty. The personal lives of both the travellers are obscure. Paes came during the reign of Krishna Deva Raya, the greatest king of Vijayanagara Empire ever had. At the time the *Hindu* capital was at its highest grandeur and magnificence. His recordings are of unique values as they provide first hand vivid and graphic account of his personal experiences. He had not only witnessed the wealth of Vijayanagara but also the most gallantly fought battles in the history of Vijayanagara - the Battle of *Raichur* between the grand army of Krishna Deva Raya consisting of about a million and Adil Shah of Bijapur. He has also given a very interesting account of the two festivals, the *Mahanavmi* and the *New Year's Day*. His book is named as, "*Narrative of Domingo Paes*".

Fernao Nuniz was a horse merchant who lived three years in Vijayanagara during the reign of Achuta Deva Raya. He describes its history from its foundation to the end of the rule of Achuta Deva Raya.

---

[7] *Ibid.* p. xxxiii.
[8] *Ibid.* p. lxxi.

The original Portuguese edition of their accounts was published in 1897 A.D. by Senhor Lopes. Robert Sewell translated their accounts into English entitled, *"A Fogotten Empire"* in 1900 A.D.

Cesare Federici was a jeweler and traveler from Venice, Italy and he travelled in the east from 1563 to 1581.[9] He spends eighteen years in commercial pursuits and travels in the southern coasts and islands of Asia. He travelled throughout India, visiting mostly coastal forts and towns; on the west and east coast. Most of these were under the Portuguese influence including Goa, Diu, Cambaya, Daman, Basain, Chiaul, Vijayanagara, Onor, Mangalore, Cannanore and Cochin.

From Venice he reached Ormuz by the usual route and then entered through ship in India at Diu. "situated in a little island in the kingdom of Cambaya, which is the greatest strength that the Portugals have in all the Indies, yet a small city, but of great trade."

In 1567 Ceasare Federici went to Goa and then by inland to Vijayanagara. At that time the Vijayanagara was in the state of ruination after the two year of cruelty passed in the battle of *Talikota* (1565). He gives a melancholy picture of the ruined greatness of the mighty city; "*The city of Bezeneger is not altogether destroyed, yet the houses standstill, but empty and is dewelling in then nothing, as is reported but Tygres and wild beast.*"[10] He returned to Goa then journeyed to Cochin. Of the Nairs of this city he gives same interesting details.

Following this he went to Quilon and after touching at Ceylon, seems to have gone on to Negapatam, St. Thome, Orissa, Bengal, Pegu and a number of other places beyond India proper. Federici returned to Ormuz in 1580, and finally reached Venice in 1581.

Federici's account is valuable and has been appreciated for the very clean description of the trade routes and products of the East. Contemporaneous events in India are also found in Federici's account is very simple, depicting the places he

---

[9] Oaten, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

[10] Purchas, Samuel, *Hakluyt Posthumus or Purchas his Pilgrimes, Contayning A History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and Others*, Glasgow, James MacLehose, 1905, Vol. X, p. 97.

visited with their products and very seldom giving a more personal touch to his description.

Federici's account of his voyages, "*Viaggio nell'India orientale, etaltral'India*", was published in Venice in 1587 by Andrea Muschio in Italian but have never been translated into any modern language except English. An English version appeared in London in 1588 by Thomas Hickock and was printed in Hakluyt's, *the Principall Navigations, Voyages, Traffics and Discoveries.*

Towards the close of the sixteenth century, Jan Huyghen van Linschoten became the first important Dutch traveller to visit the coast between Goa and Cochin. His brief life sketch is given below.

John Huyghen van Linschoten was born in 1563[11] to Huych Joosten and Maertgen Hendrics and was the native in the province of Utrecht. Linschoten from the beginning was curious to see the world and grown up in a studious youth, who "took no small delight in the reading of histories and strange adventures."[12] At the age of sixteen he took leave from his parents and went to Spain to join his two brothers. He died on 8th February, 1611.

Linschoten became the first important Dutch traveller who visited Goa in South India and stayed there for five years from 21st September, 1583 to 20th January, 1589 and paved the way for the first Dutch enterprise which reached East Indies in 1595 under the command of Cornelis de Houtman.

Linschoten reached India by the Cape route that opened the door of commercial possibilities for Holland in India and as a matter of fact Linschoten was not a great traveller which is suggested from the places covered by his travel also the travel extent never went beyond the Portuguese settlements.

His account is, however, full of valuable remarks on almost all the countries comprised in the Portuguese sphere of influence, extending from Cambay on one side to Singapore, China and Japan on the other but these places does not posssess the value of first hand evidence. He has given an eye witness account for parts in the

---

[11] Linschoten, John Huyghen Van, *The Voyage of John Huyghen Van Linschoten To the East Indies*, English tr. and ed. Arthur Coke Burnell and P.A. Tiele, London, 1885,Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1988, Vol. I, p. xxiii.

[12]. p. xxiv.

Malabar Coast. The route from Europe to Cochin was clearly explained and other routes, such as those to China, Japan and the Archipelago were also more or less carefully detailed.

The *Itinerario* of Linschoten was first published in 1596; divided into two parts, the second part was printed first which contains a collection of the routes to India, the Eastern Sea, and the American Coasts, translated from the manuscripts of Spanish and Portuguese pilots. There is also full of detail on the routes beyond Malacca in the Malay Archipelago and on the Chinese Coasts. Dr. Burnell says. "The style of Linschoten was plain and simple".[13] The *Itinerario* was originally illustrated by the thirty-six plates and plans, drawn by the author himself and six large maps made by Arnoldus and Henricus Florentii a Langren. The plates mostly refer to Goa and his neighborhood illustrating the inhabitants, manners, customs, natural products and manufactures of country. The plans are of Goa, Mozambique, Ascension, St. Helena and Angra in Tercera; Those of Goa and Angra are interesting and very full. The first map is that of the World and the others represents the West and East Coasts of Africa, the Western and Eastern portions of Southern Asia and part of America.

The book at once created a sensation and was translated into English and German in 1598. Two translations were made in Latin from Frankfort and Amsterdam in 1599. It was translated in French in 1610. The original Dutch and French editions were printed many times. Arthur Coke Burnell edited the first volume and the second volume was edited by Mr. P.A. Tiele for the Hakluyt Society and was first published in 1885 from the old English translation 1598 under the title of, *'The Voyage of John Huyghen Van Linschoten to the East Indies'.*

After its access everyone learned that the colonial empire of the Portuguese was rotten and can be supplanted by an energetic rival. The significance of the Linschoten's work is still recognized as it retained all its interest as a picture of Portuguese India at the end of Sixteenth Century.

The frequent visits of foreign travellers were ongoing in Southern India whereas the Northern India was still remained untouched by them. There is no foreign traveller in record during the Babur's reign. For Humayun's reign there is an account

---

[13] *Ibid.* p. xi.

left by a Turkish Admiral Sidi Ali Reis who had encountered Humayun's court in 1556 A.D.

Sidi Ali Reis was the son of Huseni Reis,[14] a steward of the Imperial Arsenal at Galgata and his father and grandfather were also on the same post. Thus, Sidi Reis was the descendent of a distinguished family of his time. He excelled with the pen in poetry and composition and wrote under the fictious name of "*Kiatibi*" or "*Kiatibi Rum*". He was a mathematician, astronomer, and a geographer also who had taken part in most of the naval engagements as he had inherited an insatiable love for the sea.

He accompanied Sultan Suleiman Kanuni or his eastern compaign in 1552 and was appointed to the post of Admiral of the Egyptian fleet in 1553 to India and Central Asia. Unfortunately he had a shipwreck while fighting against the Portuguese in the western Indian Ocean. He travelled through Gujarat, Hind, Sind, Balkh, Zabulistan, Badkhshan, Khotlam, Turan and Iran. He died in 1572.[15]

His accounts of India are poor as compared with the descriptions of early muslim travellers in India like Alberuni, Ibn Batuta and others. Many reasons can be placed to this short coming.

He does not seem to come in contact with the non-Muslim population and principally had to deal with the ruling class who were the adherents to the Muslim faith. He draws a very sad picture of the government in India and East as civil wars and the mutinies against the rulers were the order of the day. The non-security of the roads was also another issue felt by the Turkish Admiral. The encounter between the Mughal Humayun and the Ottoman Admiral who arrived in Delhi in late October 1555 is the best part of the account.[16] At Delhi he lived for three months and witnessed the death of Humayun and succession of Akbar in early 1556.

Mirat-ul-memalik ("Mirror of Kingdom") was originally written in *Djagatai-Turkish* language and has long since being known in the East. A German translation

---

[14] Reis, Sidi Ali, *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Sidi Ali Reis in India, Afghanistan, Central Asia and Persia, During the Years 1553-1556*, English tr. and ed., Arminius Vambery, Luzac & Co. Publishers to the India Office, London, 1899, p. 16.

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] Alam Muzaffar and Subramanyan Sanjay (eds.), *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400-1800*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2007, p. 100.

of it by Heinrich Friedrich Von Diez appeared in his "*Memories of Asia*" 2, and afterwards the translation was rendered into French by Morris and published in the *Journal Asiatique*. Arminius Vambery who was a Hungarian edited and translated it into English with the title, *'The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Sidi Ali Reis in India, Afghanistan, Central Asia and Persia during the year 1553-1556'* with a preface by a Turkish publisher Nedjib Aasim. The book has not been published in its entirety so far and due to its less availability is not accessible to the public.

Father Thomas Stephens arrived in India in 1579 A.D. from England and lived till death in 1619 A.D. He produced several works including *The Christian Purana*, in Marathi. He started his career as a rector of a college at Rachol in Salsette and later devoted himself to missionary activities.[17] His letter to his father roused considerable enthusiasm in England and led his countrymen to nurse the desire for direct trade in India. His account is not important from the point of view of present study.

During the reign of Akbar the missionaries were the first to have courtly encounter. The Jesuit contact with Akbar began in 1580 A.D. and the three missions were sent to the court. An account of the first mission was written in 1582 A.D. by Father Antony Monserrate whereas Father Du Jarric's account gives details about the three missions to Akbar. Based on the original Jesuit letters, his work throws light on Akbar and his religious activities particularly in the last decade of his reign which has not covered by the Persian annals.

Father Antonio Monserrate was born at Vic de Ozona in Catalonia in 1536.[18] The information about the early life of the Father Monserrate is meager. In 1558 he entered into the Society of Jesus and became prefect of Studies at Lisbon in 1569. He embarked for India in 1574 and was elected to accompany Father Acquaviva to Emperor Akbar's Court in 1578.

Father Monserrate reached the Mughal court at Agra on 4th March, 1580 with the first Jesuit Mission. The missionaries were warmly received at the Mughal Court. Shortly afterwards Father Monserrate was appointed tutor to prince Murad. In February, 1581 Akbar marched against Mirza Hakim to suppress his evil design.

---

[17] Kaul *op. cit.*, p. xxxii.

[18] Ansari, M. A., *European Travellers under the Mughals (1580-1627)*, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, 1975, p. 1.

Father Monserrate accompanied the Emperor in his suite as far as Peshawar and then proceeded with the Mughal army to Jalalabad. He could not proceed beyond Jalalabad on account of bad health and returned back to Lahore. In 1582 he accompanied the embassy sent by Akbar to Europe as far as Goa. In 1589, Monserrate proceeded to Abyssinia but was taken prisoner by the Arabs near Dhafar and remained in custody at Ainad: and of the Turks at Sanai. He was freed with help of an Indian merchant and returned to Goa in December 1596. He lost his health in these years of trouble and died in 1600 at Salsette.[19]

The *Mongolicae legatianis Commentarius* of Father Monserrate is an account of the first Jesuit mission to the court of Akbar in 1580-82. Father Monserrate says, 'that it has become a rule in the Society of Jesus to keep a record of all events'.[20] He engaged himself in arranging and amplifying his diary in the form of an account in 1582 when he was at Goa. He took the manuscript to Abyssinia in 1588 in the hope of finishing it. During his imprisonment at Dhafar and Sanaa he was provided facilities to complete his book and thus the manuscript was completed in December 1590 on the day of feast of S. Damascus.[21] He brings back the MS. with him to Goa in December 1596.[22]

The text of Monserrate which is in Latin was discovered by Rev. W. K. Firminger in St. Paul's Cathederal Library, Calcutta. Father H. Hosten, S. J. translated and annotated the Latin text of Monserrate on the First Jesuit Mission to Akbar that was published in the Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (Vol. III, pp. 513-704)[23] in 1914. Another translation of Commentary of Father Monserrate has been published by the Oxford Press edited by John S. Hoyland (Translator) and S.N. Banerjee (annotator).

The value of the MS. cannot be denied as it forms an original historical authority for the reign of Akbar who is credited to be greatest Musalman ruler in India by most of the modern historians. His account revolves round the Mughal Court where the access was difficult to foreigner most of the times. Every aspect of the

---

[19] Monserrate, Father Antonio, *Mongolicae legationis Commentarius*, ed., John S. Hoyland (tr.) and S.N. Banerjee (annotator), Commentary of Father Monserrate, 1922, Asian Publishers, Jalandhar, 1993, p. xii.
[20] *Ibid.* p. xv.
[21] *Ibid.* p. xii.
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] *Ibid.* p. xiii.

Akbar's character is described with a close scrutiny: his humor, his grim severity: his munificence: his penuriousness: his keen and critical insight: his credulity and superstitions. His account gives the splendor and prosperity of Akbar's capital city and the fine buildings at Delhi.

In 1583 A.D. Ralph Fitch, the first English merchant traveller arrived in India followed by John Mildenhall who was also an English trader and visited India in 1599 A.D.

Ralph Fitch was the first English traveller in the real sense to travel across India. He gives a good account of places visited by him. He started from England in a ship named *Tiger* with two other Englishmen named Newberry and Leedes in 1583[24] and reached Aleppo then travelled to Ormuz via Basrah. At Ormuz he was arrested by Portuguese and taken to Goa as prisoner. They recovered their liberty with the help of a British Jesuit, Father Stephens.

In 1585, they left Goa and made their way to Bijapur. From there to Golconda and then passing through various towns, including Burhanpur they reached the territory of Mughal Emperor. Reaching Agra which Fitch describes as a *"very great citie and populas, built with stone, having fair streets with a fair river running by it"*, they did not stay there long but pushed onto Fatehpur Sikri. At Fatehpur the three Englishmen departed with each other, Leedes entered the service of the Emperor, Newberry decided to go to the west. Ralph Fitch travelled to the Eastern provinces. He travelled Allahabad, Banaras, Patna, Hugli also travelled in the Kuch Bihar area and proceeded to Satgaon where he picked friendship with Portuguese settlers and then to Pegu, Macao, Malaccca and Ceylon and returned to Cochin in March, 1590. He returned to Europe by Goa, Chaul, Ormuz, Basrah, Aleppo and Tripoli, reaching London in April, 1591.[25] He died in October, 1611.[26]

Fitch's account of his experiences was printed by Richard Hakluyt in the second edition of his *Principall Navigations* in 1598-1600. In 1625 Samuel Purchas reprinted the account in his famous *Purchas His Pilgrimes* and a similar compliment has been paid to it in several other collections of travels, both English and Foreign. In

---

[24] Foster, William (ed.), *Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*, London, 1921, Low Price Publication, Delhi, 1999, p. 2.
[25] *Ibid.* p. 6.
[26] *Ibid.* p. 7.

1899, Mr. J. Horton Ryley, devoted to the subject entitled, *Ralph Fitch: England's pioneer to India*, containing the travellers narrative and letters, together with a number of related documents. Ryley's work sheds some light regarding the historical setting of Fitch's journey but lacking on the geographical side.

John Mildenhall was a trader and one of the early English travellers to the Mughal Court in 1599[27] craving privileges of trade on behalf of himself and his fellow countrymen. The Letters Received, vols. ii, iii, v and Kerridge's letter book in the British Museum (Additional MSS., no. 9366)[28] throws some light on the Mildenhall's later career. He died in June 1614[29] is buried at Agra.

Mildenhall had narrated his experience in the form of two documents; the first is a summary of his journey from London to Kandahar, while second is a letter giving an account of his transactions in India and of his return journey as far as Kazwin in Persia addressed to the Richard Staper. The two documents are published in Purchas His Pilgrimes, part i, book iii, chap. 1and 3. Purchas found it among the papers of Richard Hakluyt who may have obtained them from Staper.

Foreign Travellers of the Early Seventeenth Century

The seventeenth century in India saw the maturity of a very great empire in the East, the Mughal Empire. The period of a century which saw the reign of three most important Mughal rulers besides Akbar was very significant in the making of the Indian Medieval History.

The Portuguese were the only nation to take hold of territorial possessions in India comprising of Goa and a few other ports on the western coast until the close of the sixteenth century. The English were also exploring the possibilities to establish their right to trade with India through the northern passage.[30] They adopted various means to achieve their goal. They tried to impress the emperors and nobility by giving costly presents. Captain Nicholas Downton prepared a list of presents to be given to

---

[27] *Ibid.* p. 48.
[28] *Ibid.* p. 51.
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] Sangar, Pramod, *Growth of the English Trade under the Mughals*, 1993, ABS Pubs. Jalandhar, p. 10.

Jahangir. Thomas Roe had presented a very attractive sword to Jahangir.[31] The idea of present giving was very common as referred by almost all the travellers. Another way to gain their goal was to bribe the corrupt Mughal officials. Thus, the legal foundation of the East India Company was laid by a Royal Charter of December 31, 1600 A.D.

A horde of foreign travellers visited the Mughal Empire from the early seventeenth century. The early seventeenth century coincides with the period of Jahangir (1605-1627). Mostly the travellers were Englishmen. Nevertheless, there were some important non-English travellers also in record in every reign that had put forward an interesting and detailed account for the period dealing with the socio-economic and cultural life of the period. Pyard De Laval made an opening of the lists of foreign visitors during the early seventeenth century. Two things that are worth mentioning here are firstly, he was a Frenchman and secondly, he visited South India.

Francois Pyard was born in Laval[32] in France and the other details of his early life are unknown but it is assumed from his remark that in 1601 when he went to voyage he was between twenty and thirty years of age.

Pyard sailed from St. Malo in May 1601 in a ship named *Corbin* and reached the Maldives in 1602 where the *Corbin* sank. Pyard was made captive and after his release in 1607 visited Chittagong, Calicut and Goa and wrote *Discours du Voyage de Francois aux Indes orientales* which published in 1611 in Paris.[33] Pyard died in 1621.[34]

The account of the Maldives occupies the greater part of the Pyard's account. It is the four years of varied adventure and gives a general description of the Maldive islands, details of the religion, manners and custom of the people, the government and the court, trade and commerce.

Pyard proceeded to Calicut by land at the end of June 1607 and stayed in Calicut for eight months. Calicut was ruled by native ruler and was a great commercial town as observed and admired by the travellers for its conditions of

---

[31] *Ibid.* p. x.

[32] Laval, Francois Pyard, *The Voyage of Francois Pyard of Laval to the East Indies, The Maldives, The Moluccas and Brazil*, English tr. Albert Gray, (Assisted by H.C.P. Bell), London, 1887, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 2000, Vol. I, p. xvii.

[33] *Ibid.* p. xxviii.

[34] *Ibid.* p. xxx.

prosperity. He went to Cochin as prisoner and remained six weeks and gives the horror of prison as legal cruelty. Thus closes, the first volume with the author's arrival at Goa.

During his stay at Goa he made two expeditions with the Portuguese armadas, one to the north as far as Diu and Cambaye, the other to Ceylon, Malacca and the Archipelago. He narrates his description of the course of trade between the Eastern islands, China and Japan, Spainish America and the Phillippines, the Portuguese Goa and Malacca. The description of Goa includes its greatest commercial prosperity though it was in crisis of its fate. The passages on topography with some picturesque incident are too accurate and minute. The social life and government of the Portuguese described at Goa.

The first edition of the *Discours* of Francois Pyard was published in 1611 from Paris. The second edition was also published from Paris in 1615. The third edition which was the last issued in the life time of the author was published in 1619 and contains the Maldive vocabulary, and is thus the most valuable. The fourth and the last French edition was published in 1679 by Louis Billaine and edited by P. Du Val.

A complete Portuguese version was published at Goa in two volumes by Senor Joaquin Helliodoro da Cunha Rivara. The first volume was published in 1858 and the second in 1862. Once it was translated as a whole it was abridged several times in different languages.

Albert Gray translated it into English from the third French edition of 1619 and edited; with notes for Hakluyt Society in 1887 into 2 vols. under the title, '*The Voyage of Francois Pyard of Laval to the East Indies, The Maldives, The Moluccus and Brazil'*. H.C.P. Bell assisted Gray. The account is vivid and based on the travellers personal observations that make it accurate.

Beside Pyard De Laval, the other non-English travellers who visited India during the early seventeenth century were Pietro Della Valle, Francois Pelsaert and one non-European traveller Mahmud bin Amir Wali Balkhi.

Pietro Della Valle was a noble Italian from Rome who was born in 1586.[35] He was a Roman Catholic by birth; education and conviction. His early life is obscure.

Pietro's career as a traveller includes his twelve years stay in the East from September 1615 to 5th of February 1626. Pietro reached Surat in February 1623, on reaching Surat he immediately came in contact with Mughal ruler. He visited three cities of the Mughal Empire those were Surat, Cambay and Ahmedabad.

After visiting these cities he travelled down the coast of Goa. He mentioned the danger from attack by the Malabar Pirates which made it too risky to go by sea. Proceeding Southward by Honavar, Pangi and Garsopa he reached Ikkeri and then to Olala.

From Olala, Pietro returned to Mangalore from which he went by ship to Calicut being threatened on the way by pirates. Calicut was at its decline due to Portuguese hostility but was still important as Pietro appends a full description of Calicut not found as in other sources. He visited the Samorin's palaces where he saw all, the king himself and two young princes. He left Calicut in 1623 and reached Goa from where he started his journey back home. From Goa he went by sea to Muscat and travelled thence by Basrah, Aleppo and Naples to Rome which he reached in 1626.

Pietro's account the *De'Viaggi di Pietro Della valle il Pellegrino* is in the form of a series of letters to his friend Dr. Schipano which is very lengthy and bulky. It was published in Italian in 1650-58 and was translated into French in 1662-64; into Dutch in 1664-65; and into German in 1674. The last Italian edition was produced by Gancia in Brighton in 1843. In 1664, the portion of the book dealing with India and the return journey was made available to English reader.[36]

The Hakluyt Society published an annotated edition of the Indian Section of the Viaggi in two volumes in 1892 by Edward Grey is in English language.[37]

The Indian section is full of graphic description and brings a vivid life like representation of men and manners as they existed in early part of the 17th century.

---

[35] Wheeler, J.T. and Macmillan, M (eds.),*European Travellers in India*, Calcutta, Susil Gupta, 1956, p. 5, n. 9 (n. footnotes).
[36] Della Valle, Pietro, *Pietro's Pilgrimage*, Wilfrid Blunt (ed.), James Barrie, London, 1953, p. 2.
[37] *Ibid.*

Southley refers to Pietro as, 'that excellent traveller' and Sir Henry Yule found him 'the most insatiate in curiosity, the most intelligent in apprehension, the fullest and most accurate in description.....of travellers whose steps have led them to India by no inducement of trade or service but who come for their own pleasure or convenience'.

Francisco Pelseart was the native of Antwerp[38] who started his voyage to the East in 1618 in the position of an assistant factor, the lowest grade in the Company's commercial service. He was promoted to the higher rank of junior factor and reached to Surat in December 1620, by travelling overland. He was sent to Agra where he remained until the end of 1627 in the capacity of a senior factor. His death approached in September 1630.[39]

Pelseart wrote the "*Remonstrantie*" in 1626 basically contains material about the commercial activities of Dutch company. It also throws much light upon the Socio-Economic and Cultural life of the period. The original copy contains, "long, rambling sentences, loosely connected by conjunctions, which are not always appropriate, but, in passages where it is striving for effect, the construction becomes so involved that it is sometimes impossible to be certain of the precise meaning."[40]

The abbreviated translation of *Remonstrantie* was published by Thevenot in 1663. Apart from this John de Laet was permitted to use the portion dealing with the standard of life which is summarized in his *De Imperio Magni Mojolis*, published in 1631.[41] No other reference to the *Remonstrantie* can be found earlier than this as Mr. Moreland writes in the introduction of the '*Jahangir's India*' which was translated from the Dutch by W. H. Moreland, himself and P. Geyl in 1925. Mr. Moreland had translated it from the photograph of a manuscript preserved in the *Rijksarchief* which is a contemporary copy and on the evidence of handwriting it is found that it was written by a junior factor who accompanied Pelsaert on *Batavia* named Salomon Deschamps.[42]

---

[38] Pelsaert, Francisco, *The Remonstrantie*, English tr. W.H. Moreland and P. Geyl, Jahangir's India, Cambridge, 1925, Low Price Publications, New Delhi, rpt. 2001, p. ix.
[39] *Ibid.* p. x.
[40] *Ibid.* p. xiv.
[41] *Ibid.* pp. xii-xiii.
[42] *Ibid.* p. xiii.

The text is in the usual commercial script of the period and very legible but occasional blunders and corrections suggest that Salomon was not familiar with the Indian nomenclature.

Mahmud bin Amir Wali Balkhi was born in 1595 in Balkh, though his family hailed originally from Kasan in Ferghana.[43] He was the head librarian of Nazir Muhammad Khan who reigned from 1606-1642 and then from 1647-51 in Central Asia.

Balkhi travelled out of curiosity alone, from Balkh, to Afghanistan, to Peshwar and Lahore, and to Sirhind in the Punjab. Therefore, he visited Delhi and Mathura, before going on to Allahabad and Banaras. Following the Gangetic plain, his travels next took him to Patna, and Rajmahal in Bengal, whence he embarked for Orissa; the southward momentum then carried him down the length of the Indian Peninsula as far as Sri Lanka. From Sri Lanka, Balkhi embarked on a boat for Southeast Asia, but he shipwrecked on the Orissa coast. Here he spent several years in Mughal service, before embarking once more for the Indo-Gangetic heartland. Eventually, after a trip across the Rajasthan desert, he found himself in Sind, and began to consider returning home. After some political misadventures at the Mughal-Safavid frontier, he returned to Balkh in 1631.[44]

Balkhi's account *Bahr al-asrar fi ma 'rifat al akhyar* ("The Ocean of Secrets in Knowledge of the pious) was edited and annotated by Riazul Islam from Karachi in 1980 under the title, *'The Bahr ul-asrar: travelogue of South Asia'*. One more edition of it was produced in 1984 by Muhammad Sa'id, Sayyid Mu'inul Haqq and Ansar Zahid Khan from Karachi.

Originally it was in massive seven volumes but only one and a half volumes have survived the text; was compiled in the court of Nazr Muhammad Khan in Central Asia.

Balkhi's account can be divided into two parts: first, the wanderings that take Mahmud Balkhi down the Gangetic valley then down the Indian Peninsula to his strange visit to Sri Lanka, and back up to Orissa, second from the moment he enters

[43] Alam, Muzaffar, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
[44] *Ibid.* p. 133.

the service of the Mughal official Mirzan Husaini in Orissa and becomes a minor Mughal munshi and revenue administrator. The first half of the text is mystic, and provides vivid ethnographic details of life; the second is written from the perspective of a mughal official. with accounts of "native superstitions" interspersed with often cynical reflections on statecraft and some surprisingly prudish observations on morality.

The portion dealing with India in Mahmud's itinerary relate to Hindu ritual, beliefs and places of worship. He recorded whatever he found strange. As he entered India he comes into contact with the *jogis* of *Ghor khattri* near Peshawar probably in 1625. The author has used Arabic phrases extensively. He has also used Hindi words such as *penth*, *dominis*, *kanchinis*, *patras*, *dandawat*, *bhog* and *jog* (*yoga*). His Indian career was of the time span of about years i.e., from 1624-25.

The early seventeenth century that was comprised of the reign of Jahangir saw the arrival of maximum nos. of foreign travellers in Northern India. The majority of the travellers who visited during this period were from England and the significant among them were William Finch, William Hawkins, John Jourdain, Thomas Best, Nicholas Withington, Thomas Coryat, Thomas Roe and Edward Terry. Their brief biographies are as follows-

William Finch was an English traveller. His early life was unknown except that he had been a servant to Master Johnson at Cheapside.[45] He boarded on the "Hector" along with Captain William Hawkins and landed at Surat on 28th August 1608.[46] While the captain proceeded to Agra, he remained at Surat for business transactions.

On 18th January, 1610, he left Surat for Agra in compliance of summons from Hawkins via Burhanpur, Mandu and Gwalior which he had occasion to visit. On 4th April, 1610 he reached Agra and stayed there about nine months. During this period he visited Bayana, Fatehpur Sikri and the suburbs on a business tour. This long stay at the capital afforded him ample opportunity to look at the working of the Mughal state,

---

[45] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

[46] Nath, R, *India as Seen by William Finch (1608-11)*, Historical Research Documentation Programme, Jaipur, 1990, p. 11.

the life of the Indian peoples and, of course, the wonderful Mughal monuments. Lateron, he died at Baghdad.[47]

Finch maintained a regular journal which provides us a fairly good account of his experiences in India with an eye-witness observation; they are invaluable for the early years of the seventeenth century. The chief feature of his narrative is the topographical information gleaned by either in his own journeying or by diligent inquiry from others. His descriptions of cities, towns, buildings and roads are excellent. His description of the palace at Lahore before it was altered by Shahjahan is of great interest. He had discussed the episode of *Anarkali* also.

Purchas has printed Finch's narrative but the voluminous account of the outward voyage is omitted and which contained no description of India. Sir Edward Maclagan had reproduced the part relating to the Punjab in the Journal of the *Punjab Historical Society* (vol. I, no. 2)[48]

Captain Hawkins came to India at Surat on 24th August, 1608[49] in the ship named Hector. He carried a letter from James the First to Jahangir. The Portuguese at Surat thwarted him in every possible way even bribed Muqarrab Khan, the Mughal Governor. Many attempts were made to get rid of Hawkin's but all failed. On 2nd February 1609, he got success to escape to Agra and reached there on 6th April, 1609.

Hawkins remained in Jahangir's court as the resident ambassador and was made a captain of 400 horses by the Emperor. He lived in typical Mughal fashion, also married an Armenian Christian girl. On the other hand Muqarrab Khan was waiting for the opportunity to take revenge from the English captain. Therefore, he managed a meeting with Jahangir and promised to bring rubies from Goa if in return the Emperor would prohibit the English from trading. Muqarrab Khan poisoned the ears of Jahangir that if the English got a footing in India they would soon become masters. This was enough to alarm the Emperor about the approaching danger.

Jahangir dismissed the English captain from the court, also asked him to go without any reply given to him to the letters brought from King James. In November, 1611, Hawkins with his wife went for Surat. From there he boarded Middleton's fleet

---

[47] Ansari, *European Travellers in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
[48] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 125.
[49] *Ibid.* p. 62.

for England which started on 1st February, 1612 but unfortunately, Hawkins died on the way.[50]

Hawkins narrative was published in *Purchas His Pilgrimages*. William Foster published the Hawkin's account in, *"Early travels in India 1583-1619"*, London, 1921.

Hawkin's account can be categorised under the most valuable of the court of the Emperor Jahangir rivaled only by that of Thomas Roe. It also depicts the picturesque account of his adventure.

John Jourdain was the sixth child of John Jourdain elder who was a merchant of Lyme Regis in Dorsetshire. His date of birth can be approximately taken in the latter half of 1572 or sometime in 1573.[51] Nothing is known of his early years before he sailed for the East in the Ship named *Ascention* in 1608[52] and remained on voyage till 1617.

It was the company's fourth voyage in which Jourdain had taken part. He sailed for St. Augustine Bay. On 2nd September, 1609 they sailed for Surat where the ship was struck on a sand bank and lost in a tide. Jourdain while getting into a boat fell into the sea and escaped death narrowly. However Jourdain and his crew managed to reach the mainland where they were treated kindly by the native and after reached the town of Dodahwari safely where the governor received them graciously. From there they went to Surat. At Surat William Finch was the factor of the city that came to receive him. He died in his second voyage to east in 1619 at Patani,[53] on the east coast of Malay Peninsula. The interest of the account of Jourdain is mainly personal in nature. Not so much of significance can be associated with his narrative.

The manuscript of John Jourdain is preserved in the *Sloane Collection* at the British Museum in the manuscript form. This manuscript of Sloane Collection is a contemporary copy. Its four folios are written in a different handwriting from the rest. William Foster writes, "It is quite possible that we have here, a transcript which was

---

[50] *Ibid.* p. 69.
[51] Jourdain, John, *The Journal of John Jourdain 1608-1617, Describing His Experiences in Arabia, India, And The Malay Archipelago*, ed. William Foster, Hakluyt Society, Cambridge, 1905, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, rpt. 1992, p. xiii.
[52] *Ibid.* p. ix.
[53] *Ibid.* p. xii.

made for him while he was in England in 1617, and that he left it behind for record and took the original volume with him on his return to the Indies".[54] Later on it came into the possession of Sir Hans Sloane who passed it into the national collection. William Foster has edited Jourdain's account in the Hakluyt Society Series and it was published under the title, '*The Journal of John Jourdain 1608-1617 Describing his Expriences in Arabia, India and the Malay Archipelago*'.

Thomas Best was the commander of the tenth voyage conducted by the East India Company during the years 1612-1614. The purpose of the mission was the establishment of trade in Western India.

His parentage remains a mystery and the same applies to the date and place of his birth. He was probably the son of Captain George Best, the companion of Frobisher in his Arctic Voyage (1576-78).[55] His residence at Stepney for the greater part of his life suggests that he may have been born there. On his birth date, Sir John Laughten concluded that it took place about the year in 1570. He was married in the year 1587.[56] Best died in August 1639 and was buried at Stepney on the 23rd August.[57] He had risen from a humble position.

Best reached on the coast of India near Daman on 1st September, 1612 with the two vessels- *Dragon* and *Hosiander*.[58] He anchored at Daman while the Hosiander was dispatched to the bar of Surat to watch the intelligence of the state of affairs in that city.[59] He was successful in his mission of the establishment of a factory at Surat. Therefore he feasted the Diwan of Ahmadabad.

His very short Voyage to India was a big success as it enhanced their national spirit and prestige by defeating the Portuguese and providing the establishment of hopeful commerce in India. He received a hearty welcome in London.

Best's narrative was basically of political and commercial usage for the period. Purchas printed his narrative. In1934, it was also published by Hakluyt Society, London.

---

[54] *Ibid.* p. x.
[55] Best, Thomas, *The Voyage of Thomas Best To the East Indies 1612-14*, ed. William Foster, Hakluyt Society, London, 1934, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi, rpt. 1997, p. xiii.
[56] *Ibid.* p. xiv.
[57] *Ibid.* p. xlvii.
[58] *Ibid.* p. xxiv.
[59] *Ibid.*

Nicholas Withington was an English traveler whose early life is not known. He came to India as an attendant to Captain Best[60] and joined the service in the East India Company at Surat. He remained at Surat for a short duration then he was sent to Agra as an assistant to Canning. He died before April 1624.[61]

Withington called his narrative as '*Tractate*' which came in the possession of Purchas who had printed it in a concise version in his pilgrimes. In 1735 a full account of his '*Tractate*' was published in London entitled- *A Journey Over Land from the Gulf of Houdouras to the Great South Sea, performed by John Cockburn and five other Englishmen*.....To which is added a curious piece, written in the reign of King James I and never before printed, entitled- *A Brief Discoverye of Some Things best worth noteinge in the Travells of Nicholas Withington, A Factor in the East Indiese*, published in London. William Foster has published a full account of his travels in India in *Early Travels in India*, Oxford, 1921. He had omitted the outward journey of Withington.

Thomas Coryat was the son of a clergyman from Somersetshire. He got his education from Winchester and Oxford.[62] He contacted with the court circles holding a small post in the household of Prince Henry. He toured France, Northern Italy, Switzerland, and Germany on foot in 1608. He summed up his tour into an account entitled- *Coryats Crudities, hastily gobled up in five moneths travells,*[63] published in 1611, dedicated to Prince Henry. This account was a great success so Coryat had to publish a supplement in the same year, entitled- *Coryats Cramble, or his Colwort twise Sodden.*

Coryat's Indian journey was also the outcome of that great success. Coryat became the first Englishmen to sail for India with no thought of trade. He can be place in the category of real traveller, the reason is he was curious to see the new strange country and was also motivated to write a book about his experiences.

Coryat remained in Ajmer about fourteen months. He was at Agra when plague was raging in the Capital city on September 12, 1616. He also visited Mandu

---

[60] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 190.
[61] *Ibid.* p. 196.
[62] *Ibid.* p. 234.
[63] *Ibid.*

and from there he went to Surat where he died on December 1617[64] and was buried there.

Coryat left his narrative in the form of five letters. The first four letters were printed soon after their arrival in England in a pamphlet entitled- *Thomas Coriate; Traveller for the English Wits: Greeting* and the fifth was published after two years entitled *Mr. Thomas Coriat to his friends in England Sadeth Greeting*. Purchas reprinted large portions of the first, third and fifth letter in 1625. Sir William Foster had also included some extracts in *Early Travels in India.*

Sir Thomas Roe was the most important and best known English traveller who visited the court of Jahangir in 1615. He was born at Leyton, in Essex in 1580 as the son of Robert Roe.[65] He entered Magdalen College, Oxford in 1593 and the Middle Temple in 1597. Sometime later, he became an *Esquire* of the *Body* of Queen Elizabeth and was subsequently knighted by James I in 1605. He sat as a member from Tomworth in the Addled Parliament of 1614. Roe sailed from the Tilbury Hope on 2nd February, 1615, with fifteen followers in the ship, *Lion* and arrived at Swally Road on 18th September, 1615.

He died and was privately buried in the *Church* of Woodford on 6th November 1644.[66]

The journal of Sir Thomas Roe constitutes a very valuable source of information about the life at the Mughals' court, at provincial capitals and in camp, and in the light thrown upon the characters of Jahangir, Asaf Khan, Khurram and Khusrau. He mentions the *Nauroz* celebration, the *Emperor's weighing* and manner of life and his departure from Ajmer to Mandu. He reflects the opinions current at the court. However, he is unreliable when he deals of matters of which he has no personal knowledge.

An examination of the contents of this journal reveals that it is as much a political history of Jahangir as a record of Roe`s personal triumphs and failures, victories and disappointments. His mission brought him into close contact not only

---

[64] *Ibid.* p. 239.
[65] Roe, Thomas, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India, 1615-19*, ed. Sir William Foster, New and Revised edition, Oxford University Press, London, 1926, pp. xxi.
[66] *Ibid.* p. lxix.

with the emperor, but also with a number of principal personalities and pressure groups dominating the general administration of the far-flung empire. If, therefore, he describes the social customs and usages of the inhabitants, he does it in a casual manner. His preoccupation is with the political condition of India in the reign of Jahangir rather than with its social and religious picture.

The editions of Roe's *journal* published by the Hakluyt Society in 1899 and by the Oxford University Press in 1926 have been used, for these are not only exhaustive but are the only genuine editions of the work based on extant manuscripts in the various London collections. Besides the editions of his work referred to above, a few more notable issues were those by John Harries, Robert Kerr, Knox and W.H.D. Rouse.

Edward Terry was born in 1590 and was fortunate to get his education at Rochester School and Christ Church, Oxford.[67]

The opportunity for a voyage to the Indies was accepted by him in 1616 in the fleet commanded by Captain Benjamin Joseph. Terry was appointed as the *Chaplain* of Sir Thomas Roe near Ujjain towards the end of February 1617 and accompanied him to Mandu. In September 1618 he proceeded to Surat thence from there sailed for England on February 17, 1619. He had travelled parts of Malwa and Gujarat is an important fact while going through his account. He died in England in October, 1660.[68]

Terry's account was chiefly the outcome of his observations during the two and a half year stay in India as chaplain to Sir Thomas Roe. Terry presented his account of India in the manuscript to Prince of Wales. Rev. Samuel Purchas published it three years later in his Pilgrimages in 1625.[69] In 1655, Terry has reproduced his account of experiences in a separate form under the title of 'A Voyage to East India', containing 571 pages.[70] In this edition of 1655, Terry did not miss any opportunity of adding fresh details which expanded the new edition to seven or eight times the length of its original form as given by Purchas. The new one was the enlarge volume of his

---

[67] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 287.
[68] *Ibid.* p. 290.
[69] *Ibid.* p. 289.
[70] *Ibid.*

previous version. The account of Terry has been also published by Mr. Foster in *"Early Travels in India"*, Oxford University Press, 1921.

The account is more significant politically as he had written fearlessly and highlighted the administration of the Mughal Empire. It deals almost every aspect of socio-economic and cultural life during the Jahangir's period.

The access to the Mughal Court made it possible for Terry to write the history of Emperor and princes. His account of life in the Mughal Court is very interesting also he had raised some new topics which were not dealt earlier by other travellers or if picked then too are rarely described. One such topic is the love story of *Anarkali* and Prince Salim. Terry has misinterpreted the relation of *Anarkali* and Prince Salim and mentions *Anarkali* as the most beloved wife of Akbar which is not the generally accepted view. Still there is no surety in believing the fact as the issue on the *Anarkali's* existence is fully obscure. Among the foreign travellers William Finch who came in India in 1608 mentions the episode on the myth of *Anarkali's* existence in the Mughal Court. No Persian chronicler corroborates this fact. Terry's narrative makes an admirable compliment to Thomas Roe's *journal.*

Foreign Travellers of the Shahjahan's Reign

The reign of Shahjahan saw the arrival of many significant travellers like Tavernier, Bernier, Mandelslo, Manucci, Manrique and Navarrate. Besides, three Englishmen did also visited in the reign of Shahjahan. Henry lord was a preacher appointed by the *East India Company* around 1630, who devoted himself to the study of the Hindus and the Parsis. His account is not significant from the point of this study. Sir Thomas Herbert was a less significant English traveller. Whereas, the account of Peter Mundy was very important for the reign of Shahjahan as he was associated with *East India Company* also.

Peter Mundy was born at Penryn in 1596. Before visiting India he had made many travels in Europe and Asia. He visited India thrice between 1628 and 1656. He reached to Surat in September, 1628 as a *cabin* boy on a merchant-ship of the *East*

India Company; he joined the Agra factory in 1630.[71] He later on visited Western India besides a number of towns of Malwa and Bihar.

His description of Agra, its markets and its houses is both vivid and picturesque. He compares Fatehpur-Sikri with European cities in point of conformity of buildings. His brief remarks about Patna are illuminating and observations about Surat very discussive. Nothing significant indeed, escapes his attention, and his comments are often of great value on account of their accuracy.

The description of severe famine of 1630 and the description of the sufferings of the people is very touching. He never indulges in travellers' tale when he is not an eyewitness or when he is chronicling what he has gathered from others, he qualifies his statements. His knowledge of the Geography seems inadequate when he excludes the Deccan from India. There are several instances of carelessness in his account.

His account is significant as it refers to some of the peculiar socio-religious customs of the people, their economic condition and has a great deal to say about the Mughal polity and events of the political importance.

Thomas Herbert studied at Oxford and Trinity College, Cambridge. He went to Persia in 1627 as secretary to an English embassy which was sent therein that year. He reached India in 1634 and remained here for two years during the course of which he paid a short visit to Surat and the surrounding district.[72]

Herbert's narrative is based on his brief visit to India shore. His description begins with the reign of Timur and goes down to the accession of Shahjahan. The account pertaining to the region of Akbar and Jahangir engulf the greater part of the narrative and particularly no important political event has been left out

Jean Baptiste Tavernier was born in the year 1605[73] in Paris. His father's name was Gabriel who had fled from Antwerp to Paris in 1575. Gabriel was a geographer who married Suzzane Tonnelier. Tavernier had two brothers Melchoir and Gabriel.[74]

---

[71] Mundy, Peter, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*, ed. R.C. Temple, Hakluyt Society, London, 1914. Vol I, p. xx.

[72] Herbert, Sir Thomas, *Some Years' Travels in Asia and Africa*, London, 1677, pp. ii-iv.

[73] Tavernier, Jean-Baptiste, *Travels In India*, English tr. & ed. V. Ball and William Crooke, Low Price Publications, Delhi, rpt., 2000, Vol I, p. x.

[74] *Ibid.*

He made six voyages which came to be very famous in the form of his travelogue. He visited India for the first time in 1641.[75]

Tavernier original account was in French text which was published from Paris in 1675 under the title *Nouvelle Relation du Serrail du Grand Signior*. Then many French editions appeared. His account of the Sixth Voyages was translated into English, German, Dutch and Italian.

In English it was for the first time published in 1677 from London by Robert Littlebury and Moses Pitt entitled, *'A New Relation of the Inner Part of the Grand Seignors Seraglio containing Several Particulars never before expos'ed to publick View by J.B. Tavernier Baron of Aubonne'*.

Tavernier's work is an important contribution for the knowledge of Mughal India. Tavernier's observations are from the point of view of a merchant, his devotion to trade interests enabled him to collect much valuable information on the conditions of commerce, the methods and tricks of the native banker, of the *shroff* or money-changer. He gives precise accounts of the production and sale of the standard commodities – spices, snakestones, bezoar, musk, indigo, ivory and the like-which are an important contribution to the history of oriental commerce. His description of the diamond mines and the varieties of precious stones and pearls are invaluable.

In 1889, Dr. Valentine Ball republished the *Travels in India by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier Baron of Aubonne* from the original French Edition of 1676 with a biographical sketch of the author, notes, appendices etc. in London and its second edition was put forward by William Crooke.

Francois Bernier was born at Joue, near Gonnord, in Angou in September 1620.[76] He had matriculated from the University of Montpellier. In July, 1652, he passes his examination as licentiate in medicine and went to Paris in August in the same year taking his degree as Doctor of Medicine.

---

[75] *Ibid.* p. xii.

[76] Bernier, Francois, *Travels in the Mughal Empire A.D. 1656-1668*, Tr. and ed., Archibald Constable and Vincent A. Smith, first published, 1934, Low Price Publications, Delhi, rpt., 1989, pp. xix.

Towards the end of 1658 he reached Surat after abandoning his intention of visiting Abyssinia. In March, 1659, he was on his way from Surat to Agra when he was compelled by Dara to accompany him as his physician to Ahmadabad.[77]

In July, 1663 he was at Delhi and visited Kashmir. He voyages to Bengal with Tavernier then they part near Rajmahal. Now, Bernier proceeds to Kasimbazar afterward travelling from Bengal to Masulipatam and Golkonda. At Golkonda he heard of the death of Shahjahan on 22nd January, 1666. In 1667 he embarked at Surat and then went to Shiraz (Persia) in October, 1667. He visited England in 1685 and died at Marseilles in Paris in 1688 on 22nd September.[78]

Bernier's account, *Historie de la derniere revolution des etats du gran Mogol* was published in 1670.[79] Then after, it was frequently reprinted and translated. In 1826, Irving Brock translated, *'Travels in the Moghul Empire'* from the French version in two vols. as the seventeenth edition from London.[80] In 1934, Archibald Constable edited the Irving Brock's version and its second edition was revised by Vincent A. Smith.

Bernier was interested in political and speculative philosophy which is obvious from his graphic description of war of succession that was waging on his arrival to Mughal Empire. He personally witnessed Dara being paraded in Delhi as well as Sulaiman Shukoh's arrival at the court. He also mention's the fall of Hugli, the conquest of little Tibet during the Shahjahan's reign. He had given a good description of Delhi, Agra and Kashmir.

John Albert De Mandelslo was the only German traveller who visited India during the period under study. His visit to India is very short lived i.e., from the end of April 1638 to 5th January, 1639, when he sailed to England.[81]

He was not intended to travel much in India but due to the rainy season he had several months to wait before the next English ship left for Europe. The early life of the traveller is hard to find. He returned to his native town of Gottorp in Holstein on

---

[77] *Ibid.* p. xx.
[78] *Ibid.* p. xxi.
[79] *Ibid.* p. xxv.
[80] *Ibid.* p. xxxii.
[81] Mandelslo, John Albert De, *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India (1638-1639)*, ed. M.S. Commissariat, OxfordUniversity Press, London, 1931, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1995, p. xi.

1st May 1640. Thereafter he entered the service of the King of France as a captain of cavalry. He died early due to small pox.

In April 1638, he reached Surat[82] by sea from Bandar Abbas and left in the end of September; passing through Broach, reached Ahmadabad where he was generously entertained by the English factors, whose extraordinary luxurious manner of life is well described in this account. Gilded carriages, hung with rich Persian carpets, drawn by white bullocks, and accompanied by horses decked in silver harness, were the least reprehensible features of the gorgeous display.

In October he journey through the cities of Gujarat to the Mughal headquarters' at Agra and Lahore for a very brief period. His travels in India include Ahmedabad, Cambay, Goa, Agra and Lahore.

His account is politically significant as he describes the Mughal polity and administration. He had also given a good description of socio-cultural life of the places he travelled in India. The most valuable part of Mandelslo's Travels refers to his tour through the cities of Gujrat in October 1638 as it is based on his own personal observation and experiences. His account of the visit to the Viceroy of Goa, of the great religious establishments and churches of the Jesuit and of the royal hospital in this city, is also first hand.

Mandelslo never went further east than India and yet the published version of his voyages give long accounts of Sumatra, Java, the Moluccas, Japan and China, none of which countries was ever visited by him. His itinerary was confined to a somewhat narrow region of the Indian peninsula.

Mandelslo's account was published in German by Adam Olearius at Schleswig in 1658.[83] J.Davis translated it into English and published it in 1662, from London.[84] The first edition of the French translation of Mandelslo's Travels was published by Abraham de Wicquefort in 1662.

---

[82] *Ibid.*
[83] *Ibid.* p. xiii.
[84] *Ibid.* p. xvii.

Niccolao Manucci born in 1639[85] was a self-educated Venetian adventurer. He showed away on a ship bound for India in 1653, aged fourteen, and was taken into service by the English Royalist, Viscount Bellomont. He reached India in 1656 via Smyrna Isphahan and Gombron.[86]

In 1656 Manucci enlisted in Dara Shikoh's army as an artilleryman, later becoming captain of artillery for Raja Jai Singh of Amber. Somewhere along the way he picked up some medical knowledge and set himself up as a physician in Lahore, c. 1670. In 1678 he returned to the Mughal Court, became physician to Shah Alam's wife, and returned to the Deccan in her employ. Thus he occupied various positions of trust and responsibility in the Mughal court. After resigning his service in the evening of his life he made his way to Bassain, north of Bombay, and stayed for sometime in Goa. He was granted late in life by the Governor and the council of Madras household land in perpetuity together with a house in the city where he died in 1717.[87]

Manucci's account. "*Storia do Mogor*" was originally written partially in French, Italian and Portuguese. The MSS. wandered from India to France, Italy, Holland, England and finally in Germany.[88] William Irvine translated it into English in 4 volumes in 1907-08 in London. It gives a vivid eye witness' account of Mughal India during the reign of Shahjahan (1628-1658), of which period the author draws a rather partial picture of the last six years and deals fully with the reign of Aurangzeb (1659-80).

Pedre Maestro Fray Sebastien Manrique was a Portuguese from Oporto who was attached to Bengal Mission in 1629[89] and remained for next six years in Arakan. Between, 1637 to 1640 he made voyage to the Phillippines and China. During 1640-41 he travelled through Northern India from Dacca to Qandhar on his way to Europe. In India he visited Goa, Bengal, Patna, Lahore, Agra, Sindh and Multan. He reached Rome in 1643 and was murdered by his own Portuguese servant in 1669 in London.[90]

---

[85] Manucci, Niccolao, *Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India 1653-1708*, English tr. & ed. William Irvine, London, 1907, Low Price Publications, Delhi, rpt., 1990, Vol. I, p. iii.
[86] *Ibid.*
[87] *Ibid.*
[88] *Ibid.*
[89] Manrique, Fray Sebastien, *Travels of Fray Sebastien Manrique, 1629-1643*, ed., C.E. Luard & Father H. Hosten, Hakluyt Society, London, 1926, Vol. I, pp. xxvii-xxviii.
[90] *Ibid.*, p. xxviii.

Manrique gives a true picture of the social life of the time. He describes the fertility of the Gangetic plain and of the magnificence of its cotton fabrics. He was struck by the richness of the people, the fertility of the soil and the abundance of victuals in Northern India. He observes the custom of Suttee, the reverence which the people had for the Ganges and the Cow and their self-immolation at Jaggernat and Ganga Sagar. He also mentions the weighing ceremony of the Mughal Emperor, Shahjahan, the Mughal *darbar* and the *nauroz* festival.

Manriques account seems to be without the European prejudice which was the common feature of the contemporary travellers. In spite of being a Roman Catholic missionary he appreciates the good feature in the Eastern civilization. He likes the orderliness in the Mughal camp. His account cannot be completely relied on as he had also copied some part like his account on Mughal governance from De Laet who himself is categorized as a compiler. The matters beyond his personal observation should be handled very carefully.

The *Itinerario De Las Missions Orientales* was originally in Spanish language, published in two editions, one in 1649 and the other in 1653.[91] The British Museum and the Bodleian library have copies of the 1649 edition, and All Souls College one of that of 1653. It was edited and translated into English by Lt.- Col. C. Eckford Luard assited by Father H. Hosten with introduction and notes entitled, *'Travels of Fray Sebastien Manrique 1629-1643'*, published for Hakluyt Society in 1927. The chapters relating to the Punjab have been translated by Sir Edward Maclagan in the *Journal of the Punjab Historical Society*. Other chapters are translated in Bengal Past and Present by Father H. Hosten and L. Cardon in Vols. XII and XIII.

Friar Domingo Navarette was a Spanish missionary traveller, born on 1618 at Castrogeriz in Spain. He was the son of Francisco de Castro and Maris Navarette. He entered the Dominican priory of Penefiel in 1634 and became a friar on 8th December, 1635. He studied from the Dominican priory of San Pablo in Valladolid. After ordination to the priesthood and election to a fellowship in the college of San Gregorio, was made lecturer in Arts and appointed a college councillor. In July, 1645, after meeting Friar Juan Bautista Morales, he volunteered for the Philippine mission.

[91] *Ibid.* p. xxix.

Navarette had toured many countries round the world. He describes his visit to China, the Phillipines, Indonesia, Macassar, Madagascar, St. Helena, Portugal and Italy. On 14th December, 1670 he arrived at Goa. From there he landed at Swally, the seaport of Surat,[92] on 8th January, 1671.

Navarette's account touches almost all aspect of social life along the Coast of Coromandel. He concentrates more on the religious questions. He praises the art and trade of professional women dancers, who were only a source of entertainment. He gives comment on the personal life of the King of Golconda, Abdulla Qutb Shah (1626-1672) who indulged in worldly pleasures and was not active in governance.

Navarette's account is politically significant as his account gives the description of usurpation of the throne by Aurangzeb, imprisonment of Shahjahan in Agra fort where he died in 1666 A.D. He brings forth the richness of Bengal in respect of production of all sorts.[93] His account is invaluable for all aspect of human life in Deccan during the latter half of the seventeenth century.

Foreign Travellers of the Aurangzeb's Reign

In the reign of Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707) came many travellers in which some were non-English travellers like John de Thevenot, Abbe Carre, Martin and Careri. But unlike the reign of Shahjahan, his reign saw the outburst of English travellers in India. Some of them like John Marshall, Streynsham Master snd William Hedges were associated with East India Company. Norris came as an ambassador with a mission at the Court of Aurangzeb. The remaining were mere travellers like John Fryer, Ovington, Bowrey and Hamilton who had left precious accounts of their experiences in India.

---

[92] Navarette, Friar Domingo, *Travels and Controversies of Friar Domingo Navarette 1618-1686*, ed., J.S. Cummings, Hakluyt Society, London, 1962, Vol. I, pp. xx –xxxvii.

[93] *Ibid.* pp. 319-20.

John Fryer was the eldest son born to William Fryer of London in 1650.[94] In 1672 he took his first Cambridge degree and in 1673 was appointed to the post of surgeon in the service of the East India Company.[95] He died on 30th March, 1733.[96]

Fryer started his eastward journey in the ship *Unity* from Gravesend in December 1672 and arrived at Bombay on 9th December, exactly a year after his departure from England.[97] He sailed to Madras with a fleet of ten ships which had been armed for the conveyance of treasure during the war between the English and Dutch in 1673.[98] The sphere of his travel included Coromandel and Malabar coasts and trips to a little way inland at various places between Cambay and Goa.[99]

Fryer travelled little in the neighborhood of Bombay and his map of the harbor is incomplete and inaccurate. He did visit the island of *Kanheri*, where he examined the Buddhist caves and inspected Bassein which was in the hands of the Portuguese. On 19th January, 1681-82, he embarked for England in the annual home fleet.[100]

Upon his return, after reading several published accounts, he was prompted to improve and publish as a narrative various letters he had sent home from India in order to bolster the general impression of India by earlier travellers. His eight years in the East furnished the materials for his *New Account of East – India and Persia, in Eight Letters*, which he published in 1698.

In these letters, he gives an excellent account of the Factory and its administration at Surat which throws welcome light on the duties and condition of the Company's officers at that period. He also displayed much industry in collecting information regarding the customs and rites of the native population and the animal and vegetable productions of Surat and its neighborhood. He gives curious information including tables of weights, measures, currency, notes on precious stones and other valuable productions of the East, which he doubtless obtained from the Factory officials on the Western Coast.

---

[94] Fryer, John, *A New Account of East India and Persia Being Nine Years' 1672-81*, ed. William Crooke, Hakluyt Society, London, 1909, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1992, Vol. I, p. xi.
[95] *Ibid.* p. xiii.
[96] *Ibid.* p. xxviii.
[97] *Ibid.* p. xviii.
[98] Wheeler, *op. cit.* p. 46.
[99] Fryer, *op. cit.* Vol. I, p. xxviii.
[100] *Ibid.* p. xxvi.

His references to events outside his immediate experience must be treated with caution.

John Marshall was a factor in the East India Company who was the third son of Ralph Marshall of Theddletherpe, Lincolshire. John was baptized at East Theddlethorpe Church on 1st March, 1642. He spent his school days at Louth under Mr. Skelton and passed B.A. in 1664 from Christ Church College, Cambridge. He was appointed by the East India Company on 8th January, 1668 and had his first glimpse of India on 3rd September, 1668. During his stay in India, he visited Bengal, Hugli, Madras, Balasore, Malda, Patna, Mursidabad and Aurangabad. He went back to England in 1672 and died there in 1677.[101] He had good knowledge of Arabic and Persian.

His travel account consists of notes of information on all sorts of subjects based on hearsay as well as his personal observations. He gives his opinion on the trade and economy of the period especially the trade value of Malda, Hugli, Patna and Balasore. Frequently references to socio-religious customs and Mughal polity are found scattered in his account.

John Ovington was born in 1653 at a place called Melsonby, near Darlington in Yorkshire.[102] He was from a respectable family of yeoman farmers. He was educated from Grammer School of Kirby Ravensworth and Trinity College, Dublin. There is no record of Ovington's life from 1679 to 1689. On 11th April, 1689, he sailed from Gravesend on the East India Company's vessel the *Benjamin* as the chaplain of the ship.

Ovington reached Bombay on 29th May, 1689. He had to remain at Bombay for three and a half months due to the burst of South-west monsoon. Ovington gives a gloomy picture of Bombay. Ovington remarks, '*I cannot without horror mention, to what a pitch all vicious enormities were grown in this place.....Luxury, immodesty and a prostitute dissolution, of manners found still new matter to work on*'.[103] From

---

[101] Marshall, John, *John Marshall in India-Notes and Observations in Bengal 1668-72*, ed., Shafaat Ahmad Khan, Oxford University Press, London, 1927), pp. 1-17.

[102] Ovington, John, *A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689 by J. Ovington*, ed., H.G. Rawlinson, Oxford University Press, London, 1929, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, rpt., 1994, p. ix.

[103] *Ibid.* p. xii.

Bombay he went to Surat and Ovington remained there till 1693 as the chaplain of the English East India Company.

At Surat, Bartholomew Harris was the president. At Surat, Ovington had given a very good description of the everyday life in the Factory which is a valuable complement to the earliest narrative of Fryer.

The two and a half years' residence at the Surat factory was fruitful for Ovington. He collected a no. of facts about the narrative inhabitants, Hindu, Mohammedan, and Parsi. His picture of contemporary Indian life, custom and religious observances are accurate and entertaining. His remarks on the Parsis are particularly valuable. who he describes as 'in their calling very industrious and diligent, and careful to train up their children to *'arts and labour'*.

In February, 1693, he started for Gravesend on the same vessel *Benjamin* and reach there on 5th December 1693.

He started to write, *'A Voyage to Surrat in the year 1689'*, which was completed in 1696. He dedicated it to the Earl of Dorset. Jacob Tonson published it in 1696. It was also translated into French by an anonymous in early eighteenth century. In 1929, H.G. Rawlinson, edited, *A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689* (Oxford University Press, London).

Ovington brought out a pamphlet also in 1699. entitled, *'An Essay upon the Nature and Qualities of Tea'*.

William Norris was born in 1657 at Speke Hall. His father Thomas Norris was a pronounced Royalist. Norris came to India as the representative, both of King William III and also of the New or English East India Company.[104]

His mission covered three years between 1699 to 1702 a period which saw the decline of the Mughal Empire and the union of the two rival companies that ultimately led to the establishment of British suzerainty in India. The professed object of this mission was to obtain commercial privileges and to promote friendship and

[104] Norris, William, *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb (1699-1702)*, ed., Harihar Das, condensed and rearranged, S.C. Sarkar. Calcutta, 1959. pp. 6, 23, 53, 56.

amity between the subjects of Mughal Emperors and those of the King of England and to join the two rival companies.

His account possesses great historical value and gives a full account of day today events and the matters concerning the embassy and also adds much to our knowledge regarding the life of the Mughal court. The main object of Norris in recording this account was to report the progress of his mission and to record particularly the customs, manners, policies and interests of the Great Mughal and other prince for the king's information. His account portrays an overall picture of Mughal policy, socio-religious customs, as well as trade and economy of the period.

His embassy was a failure but as a source of information, his journal is very rich in depicting almost all aspects of the society of that period. In fact his qualities as narrator are adjudged unequalled by most of the preceeding travellers. Of course, he does go wrong at times. He wrongly records that the the mother of Prince Mohammad Akbar, the fourth son of Aurangzeb, was a Rajput lady. He also confuses Bijapur with Bhagnagar or Hyderabad.[105] Moreover, he was not without prejudice. But his impressions as far as the people themselves were concerned were unbiased at least by racial feeling or religious bigotry.

Thomas Bowrey was a sailor by occupation from Wellclose Square, Stepney.[106] He was a well-educated man of his time, an accurate observer and deeply interested in the natives of the country visited. He was on his eastward voyage from 1669-1679.[107]

In India he visited the following places – The Choromandel Coast, Golconda, the Coast of Gingili, Orissa and Bengal. He started his career at fort St. George, Madras. He was very well acquainted with the writings of Bernier and with the mogul history down to his own time. He died on 11th March, 1713.[108]

His account disseminates multifarious information. His representation of ships and boats are invaluable as well as uncommon, also accurate. His description and

---

[105] *Ibid.* pp. 119, 214, 244.
[106] Bowrey, Thomas, *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal, 1669-1679*, ed., R.C. Temple, Hakluyt Society, Cambridge, 1905, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1993, p. xliv.
[107] *Ibid.* p. xviii.
[108] *Ibid.*

careful drawings of native boats are among the best of the kind for his period; he offers the earliest quoted instances of "*bunko*" and "*cheroot*".

He had also given eye witness accounts of the social evil practices like sati prevalent during the closing of the seventeenth century. His informations for the subject of East Coast of India are full. He shows clearly that a '*gentoo*' was a low-caste Hindu, accurately defines the Rajput and raja. The description of Gingerlee Coast and Janselone Island are also very invaluable contribution of the author.

Streynsham Master was born in 1640 and became the chief representative of the East India Company's factories on the Coromandel Coast and in the Bay of Bengal. Master sailed for India in 1656 with his uncle George Oxenden and for the next four years he remained under the care of Christopher Oxenden, second in council at Surat, before he actually entered the Company's service in that factory in 1660. There he stayed for eleven years and returned to England in 1672.

Master was exceedingly energetic as a traveller who on the other hand was also close to his business and his policy that was strictly in the interest of his Company as his private papers prove that he was not to be bribed. His supervision had a lasting beneficial effect on the company's affairs but no less valuable is the account which he left.

The diaries and private papers of Streynsham Master relate not only to his work as a servant of the company in the years 1675-1677 and 1679-1680 but also throws considerable light on Anglo-Indian life in the seventeenth century.[109] He had vividly explained the native and Anglo-Indian terms and recorded about the management of the factories, the system of trade and economic conditions of the period.[110] His account is more valuable for the commercial history of the period than other aspect of the society.

Sir William Hedges was born on 21st October, 1632 at Coole, Co. Cork, he was the son of Robert Lacy, alias Hedges of Youghal, in Ireland but also styled of kings-down. His mother was Catharine, daughter of Edward Wakeman of Mythe in Gloucestershine. His first selection was made on the 3rd September, 1681. On the 14th

---

[109] Master, Streynsham, *The Diaries of Streynsham Master, (1675-1680)*. ed., R.C. Temple, Published For the Govt. of India, London, 1911, Vol. I, pp. 1-9.

[110] *Ibid.* pp. 19-30.

September, 1681 an order of the court permitted him to take with him family to India.[111]

As a Governor, he failed in effecting reforms in Bengal but left a good account of his stay in India in the form of his diary. His diary is strictly business oriented and as a source of information it is valuable chiefly for exhibiting the attitude of the local governor towards the foreign traders.

Captain Alexander Hamilton was a shrewd Scotchman, who carried on a free trade in the Eastern seas between 1688 and 1723. He travelled in the Eastern parts of India and maintained a long account of his experiences.[112]

In his travelogue, the focus of his description is mainly on socio-economic conditions of the period. Hamilton seems to have been acquainted with all parts of India which bordered on the Eastern coast. His account makes interesting reading, but it is mostly a repetition of what earlier travellers had recorded. His wide experiences, however at times, gives his statements a peculiar value. In spite of the monopoly of the old East India Company his experiences of Sind and Gujarat and the stories he tells of Mughals and Hindus may accepted as trustworthy.

Jean de Thevenot was born at Paris on 6th June 1633[113] in a reputed family. He was an ardent student of geography and natural sciences and had studied the accounts of early travellers. He had finished his education from the University of Paris.[114]

Mclechisedech de Thevenot was his uncle, a scholar who undertook to compile the exhaustive account of famous travels. Thevenot was influenced by his uncle. He had a great desire to visit different countries and this made him to visit many countries of Europe, Asia and Africa.[115] He visited England, Holland, Germany and Italy in 1652.

---

[111] Hedges, William, *The Diary of William Hedges, 1681-1687*, ed., R. Barlow and H. Yule, London, 1887-89, pp. vii-xxvii, Vol. II.

[112] Hamilton, Alexander, *A New Account of the East Indies, Being the Observations and Remarks of Captain Alexander Hamilton, 1688-1723*, ed. Sir William Foster, London, 1739, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1995, Vol. I, pp. i-iv.

[113] Thevenot, Jean de, *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, ed., Surendranath Sen, The National Archives of India, Queensway, New Delhi, 1949, pp. xvii.

[114] Wheeler, *op. cit.* p. 41.

[115] Thevenot, *op. cit.* p. xvii.

On 24th January, 1664 he embarked at Marseilles. He was at Alexandria on 24th February then went to east to visit Damascus, Aleppo and Mosul to sail down the Tigris to Baghdad. On 6th November, 1655 he boarded at Basra English ship the Hopewell owned by an Armenian and commanded by an Italian captain Bernardo for India. On 10th January, 1666, he landed at Surat.

In India he remained for a year only but travelled overland to Ahmadabad and Cambay. Towards the Deccan Peninsula he journeyed to Masulipatnam on the eastern coast passing through Burhanpur, Aurangabad and Golconda. He also spent two hours at Ellora. On February, 1667 he started for his return voyage from Surat and unfortunately died on the way near the small town of Miama in Persia.[116]

Thevenot's account consists of many interesting description's relating to flora and fauna also. Beside the account of the inhabitants he also took interests in the animals and writes indiscriminately of apes, baboons and monkeys. His account on the administration of Gujarat is invaluable. He was acquainted with the tract between Surat and Cambay and the road from Surat to Masulipatnam. The most valuable and reliable part of Thevenot's account, is that where he records his personal experiences. However, his account is not free from occasional errors.

The Voyages of Jean de Thevenot were issued in successive parts from 1664 to 1684. In 1689 all the three were collected under one title, *Voyages de M. de Thevenot tent en Europe qu'en Asie et en Afrique-Paris*, 1689, 5 vols. The entire five successive editions in five volumes appeared at Amsterdam in 1705, 1723, 1725, 1727 and 1729.

Thevenot's Voyages was first made available in English by A. Lovell by printing at London in 1682 by H. Clark for H. Faithorne, J. Adamson, C. Skegnes and T. Newborough, Booksellers in St. Paul's Churchyard. It also consist three parts (i) Turkey (ii) Persia and (iii) The East Indies.

---

[116] *Ibid.*

Abbe Carre, the son of French nobleman, was born in 1639-40.[117] He was evidently well-educated and acquainted with both Greek and Latin classic literature.[118]

He was sent to India by Colbert, the able minister of Louis XIV in the capacity of a spy to watch over the conduct and motions of English and the Dutch and also to observe his own countrymen. He arrived in India via the Syrian Desert, Mesopotamia (Iraq) and the Persian Gulf in October, 1672.[119]

In India he travelled to many places including South India. His journey to Surat to Madras was an adventurous one. In the course of journey at Bijapur, Carre nearly died from malaria. At Madras he was appointed as an agent of de la Haye for the surreptition supply of provision from there and for any desired negotiation with the English governor.

He gives a full account of the French Squadron from its departure in March, 1670 to its capture at St. Thome (near Madras) and the disastrous attempt to throw out the Dutch from Trincomlaie in Ceylon. It also contains valuable remarks on the weaknesses of the French administrative methods, compared with those of the Dutch and English, on the failure of the arms for which de la Haye, squadron was sent to India and on the continuance of Portuguese pride and luxury in spite to their fall from power.

Carre's journal *Voyage des Indes Orientales, male de plusieurs Histories Curieuses* was first published in French in two volumes at Paris in 1699[120] was based upon his dispatches between 16th March 1672, and 26th October, 1674. The journal of Abbe Carre gives a detailed account of his travels in 1672-74. The journal of Abbe Carre gives a detailed account of his travels in 1672-74 from France to India.

His account is politically significant in many ways as his arrival to India was itself a political activity as he was sent to watch over the activities of the English and Dutch, also to observe his own countrymen. He travelled to Southern India also which was rare as most of the seventeenth century travellers limited themselves to Western

---

[117] Carre, Abbe, *The Travels of Abbe Carre in India and the Near East, 1672-74*, English tr. & ed., Lady Fawcett & Charles Fawcett, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1990, p. xxvi, Vol. I.
[118] *Ibid.* pp. 17, 310.
[119] *Ibid.* p. xiii.
[120] *Ibid.* p. xix.

India only. His account throws some light on the movements of Shivaji during 1671-72. He gives accounts on the trade relations of the Dutch trade with the Mughal India. His account also contains socio-religious matters occasionally.

Giovanni Francesco Gamelli Careri was born in 1651 in a noble family of Radicena at Naples.[121] He was a student of jurisprudence and had earned the degree of Doctor of Civil Law. Like Thevenot he also visited Shiraz and the ruins of Persepolis and then went via Lar to Bandar Congo where he took a boat for Daman on the 26th November, 1694.[122]

He went to Bassein from Daman where he visited the famous Buddhist caves at Kanheri and gives its minutest details. He then proceeded to Goa. He also refers to the decline of Portuguese power in India.

Careri was keen to have an audience with the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb who was then encamped at Galgala and waging a war against the powers of the south that was ultimately to prove the ruin of his empire.[123] Careri was succeeded in obtaining admission to the court of the emperor of whom he has left a fairly good pen portrait. He returned to Goa by a partly different route and embarked for China. He died at Naples in 1725.

His account is full of information about the administrative set up, social habits of the people, the agricultural and industrial products as well as the plants and animals. His remarks on the Mughal administration, the land revenue system, the extent of Aurangzeb's wealth, territory and the organization of his army are useful. His information on the Aurangzeb's Deccan campaign is indispensable.

Careri's account *Giro del Mondo* was published in 1699-1700 at Naples in 6 Vols. Each volume was dedicated to a separate personage of a particular country.[124] The volume on Hindustan was dedicated to D'on Carlos Sanseverino, Prince of Birignano and Duke of Sao Marco. His original account was in Italian which

---

[121] Wheeler, *op. cit.* p. 96.
[122] Careri, G.F. Gemelli, *A Voyage Round the World by Dr. John Francis Gemelli Careri, Part IIIrd,* ed., Surendranath Sen, Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri, The National Archives of India, Qweensway, New Delhi, 1949, p. xxi.
[123] *Ibid.* pp. 183, 207, 217.
[124] *Ibid.* p. xxiv.

underwent eight editions within thirty years. The last edition which came out to be in 1728 is considered best.

His work was translated into English, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese. Its English version appeared in Awnsham and John Churchill's, *A collection of Voyages and Travels* (1704) and reappeared in the subsequent edition of that collection in 1732, 1744, 1745 and 1752.[125] The first French version was published at Paris in six volumes in 1719 under the title of *Voyage autour du Monde.* It went through two more editions in 1727 and 1776-1777.[126]

From the brief biographies of the above travellers it is evident that they came in different professions and recorded the contemporary events, circumstances and conditions – political, social, economic, cultural and administrative, topographical details, ideas and concepts, trade, flora and fauna, behaviour and etiquette and many other aspects of life which are valuable for understanding the socio-cultural as well as economic life of the time. They have written about all phases of Indian life, the Court, its grandeur, the army and its strength rivalries among the countries, administration, its strength and weakness. Conditions of the masses, their poverty, about privileged class, main trade routes and by routes, important cities and towns, manufacture, commodities and prices, land product and taxation.

Thus, the accounts of the foreign travellers are helpful in reconstructing the history of medieval India and form an inseparable element of historical material supporting the edifice of Indian society and culture. Without travelogues various facets of Indian history would have remained shady and obscure, it is with this important class of source material that we measure the multiplex nature of Indian culture and society, economic pattern and way of life.

---

[125] *Ibid.* xxv.
[126] *Ibid.*

CHAPTER – II

CHAPTER-II

Society of 16th and 17th Century as Depicted in the Accounts of Foreign Travellers

The Indian society during the period was stratified primarily into three sections- upper, middle and lower. While the king and his nobility formed the upper section, the court poets, physicians, traders, artisans and farmers comprised the middle and the masses constituted the lower section.

The sovereign was the highest authority heading the social hierarchy and under him were the nobility who were conferred with high offices in the state. The nobility played an active role in assisting the ruler in implementing the policies of state. The *mansabdars* and jagirdars who formed a large part of this section maintained landed estates, used luxury products sumptuously and indulged in a life of self-indulgence and licentiousness.

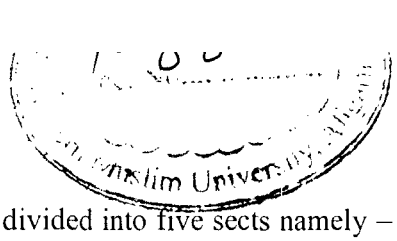
The nobles led a comfortable and marvelous lifestyle, and foreign visitors provide a pleasing picture of the life of the nobility. Articles of luxury like ornaments, perfumes, betel-leaves and a number of other stimulants were in great demand, with foreign merchants carrying on a brisk and prosperous trade in these articles. According to Nuniz, people in Vijayanagara ate almost everything, except the flesh of oxen or cows. Mention is also made of intoxicants comprising the usual liquor, among which a drink known as the *maireya* was very popular.

The Social Structure

The Indian social structure during the sixteenth and the seventeenth century was by no mean homogenous in character.[1] It was mainly comprised of the Muslims and the Hindus in great majority during the medieval period but at the opening of the sixteenth century there was incorporation of the Portuguese in the Indian population who were never comparable to the other two elements i.e., the Muslims and the Hindus. The Portuguese presence was felt at the west coast of India by all the foreign observers of the sixteenth century.

---

[1] Moreland, W. H., *India at the Death of Akbar, an Economic Study*, Low Price Publications, Delhi, (1920, rpt. 1990), p. 23.



The inhabitants and natives of India were divided into five sects namely – (1) The Hindus (natives), (2) The Moguls (Conquerors by land), (3) The Portuguese (the first discoverer), (4) Dutch, English, Strangers and (5) Parsies.[2] Besides natives there were *"Persians, Tartars, Abissinians, Armenians, Jews, Christians, Mahometans, and others; but the most universal Religions are the Mahometans, and the Pagan."*[3]

The main population was generally constituted by the Muslims and the Hindus but the distribution of others could not be ignored scattered in some region.

The foreign travellers found the Indian society dominated by the Muslims as, "they were neither a separate nation in India, though they were the leaders of the heterogeneous Indian society in culture and civilization, both spiritual and material so far as the public life in general was concerned."[4]

In the Muslim society the status of an individual rested, not on his birth as in the caste system, but on his religious faith. All the believers were equals in society. This was in keeping with the message of Islam, an uncompromising monotheistic religion.

But with the passage of time especially after the orthodox Caliphate arose diversity in Islam. According to Tavernier, this diversity that exists among the Muslims consist two reasons. First reason is due to the different explanations given to Quran and the other reason is holding different opinions which they entertain regarding the first successor of Prophet Muhammad.[5] Further Tavernier observed, *"This cause two sects, entirely opposed to one another, have sprung; the one calling itself the Sunnis is followed by the Turks, the other the Shias, which is the sect of the Persians."*[6]

The other foreign observers had also felt this heterogeneity of the Muslim society in India during the period under study. The Muslim society in India was though theoretically presented itself to, "the superficial view as *prima facie* a solid homogeneous block held together by the cement of Islam, it was in reality a

---

[2] Fryer, John, *A New Account of East India and Persia Being Nine Years' 1672-81*, ed. William Crooke, Hakluyt Society, London, 1909, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1992, Vol. II, p. 439.

[3] Careri, G. F. Gemelli, *A Voyage Round the World by Dr. John Francis Gemelli Careri, Part IIIrd*, ed., Surendranath Sen, Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri, The National Archives of India, Qweensway, New Delhi, 1949, p. 254.

[4] Yasin, Mohammad, *A Social History of Islamic India, 1605-1748*, Upper India Pub. House, Lucknow, 1958, p. x.

[5] Tavernier, Jean-Baptiste, *Travels In India*, English tr. & ed. V. Ball and William Crooke, Low Price Publications, Delhi, rpt., 2000, Vol. II, p. 137.

[6] *Ibid.*

composite community having within its fold representatives of races from all over the Muslim world and Hindu converts from all grades of society."[7]

A large number of Muslims had entered India from the north-west in the five or six centuries preceding the establishment of Akbar's Empire. They immigrated to Indian soil with the intention to make it their new home. So they inter-married with the Indian people and had become Indian in the real sense by assimilating well with the Indian people and had become Indian in the real sense by assimilating well with the Indian peoples. Their immigration effected conversion on a very large scale. The Hindu-converts came to be known as *Nau-Muslims.*[8]

Both the *Nau-Muslims* (convertee) who were already Indian and the 'Immigrant Muslims' were collectively formed a class of Muslim known as '*Indian Muslims*' or '*Hindustani Musalmans*'.[9] They were popularly known as '*sheikhzadas*' and were also posted in the state services but were in minority and their position was always inferior to other classes of the nobility.

Indian Muslims are described by Manucci as those 'who are descended from the family of Mohammad but very remote from the Sayyids. This race holds land and also remains in service at the courts, great and petty; they are very subtle, of great intelligence, very litigious and great lawyers. Others became recluses and holy men and by that false pretence gained a living'.[10] They came to the limelight between 1560 and 1575 when Akbar took to reorganizing his nobility. Thenceforth, they were treated with special favour and carved out a place of distinction in the Mughal nobility.

They enjoyed high mansabs and important military and administrative positions during Shahjahan's period too. In the first phase, their number was 32 0ut of 342. They improved their position in 1637-41, as their number was 28 0ut of 255 mansabdars. In the last phase (1642-58), they improved further, as they numbered 59 out of the total of 448.[11]

---

[7] Yasin, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
[8] *Ibid*, p. 14.
[9] *Ibid*, p. 13.
[10] Manucci, Niccolao, *Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India 1653-1708*, English tr. & ed. William Irvine, London, 1907, Low Price Publications, Delhi, rpt., 1990, Vol. II, p. 427.
[11] Anwar, Firdos, *Nobility under the Mughals* (1628-1658), Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 30-31.

The Muslim nobility was predominately *Turanis*[12], *Iranis* and *Afghans*. *Abyssinian* and *Arabs*[13] also constituted the nobility but were much lesser in numbers. These Muslims were outsiders unlike the Indian muslims who came with the sovereign of their time to assist them in running the administration properly. At Goa, there were also many Persians, Arabian, and Abexijans, some (of them) Christians, and some (of them) Moores.[14]

The ruling house belonged to the *Turani* stock and Shahjahan showed more attachment to it by styling himself as '*Sahib Qiran-i-sani*'. In the first phase (1628-36), they numbered 53 out of 342. They improved during 1637-41, as there were 50 *Turanis* out of the total of 255. With a slight addition, almost the same strength was there in the last phase (1642-58), i.e, 96 out of 448.

A great change in the composition of Mughal nobility occurred between 1540 and 1555. The *Irani* nobility started increasing its power. Abul Fazl give the list thus; among 57 nobles who accompanied Humayun to India were 27 *Turanis* and 21 *Iranis* while the rest of them cannot be identified.[15]

The *Iranis* emerged as a powerful faction even during the reign of Akbar due to their 'undivided support' to the Mughal crown. The process continued during Jahangir's reign. Their excellent services, devotion and sincerety carved out a distinct place for them in the court of Jahangir.[16]

The *Iranis* maintained their improved and elevated position during Shahjahan's reign. They emerged as the only dominant group of nobles. In spite of all

---

[12] Jarric Du, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, translation with introduction and notes by C. H. Payne, London, 1926. p. 174.

[13] For the composition of the Muslim community compare Monserrate, Father Antonio, *Mongolicae legationis Commentarius*, ed., John S. Hoyland (tr.) and S.N. Banerjee (annotator), Commentary of Father Monserrate, 1922, Asian Publishers, Jalandhar, 1993, p. 83, Laet, De, *The Empire of the Great Mogol*, Tr. J.S. Hoyland & S.N. Banerjee (annotated), Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, New Delhi, First published, 1928, Second edition, 1974, p. 80, Bernier, Francois, *Travels in the Mughal Empire A.D. 1656-1668*, Tr. and ed., Archibald Constable and Vincent A. Smith, first published, 1934, Low Price Publications, Delhi, rpt., 1989 pp. 3, 48, 209, Mundy, Peter, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*, ed. R.C. Temple, Hakluyt Society, London, 1914, Vol. II, p. 305, Thevenot, Jean de, *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, ed., Surendranath Sen, The National Archives of India, Queensway, New Delhi, 1949, p. 15, Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

[14] Linschoten, John Huyghen Van, *The Voyage of John Huyghen Van Linschoten To the East Indies*, English tr. and ed. Arthur Coke Burnell and P. A. Tiele, London, 1885. Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1988, Vol. I, p. 223.

[15] Husain, Afzal, *the Nobility under Akbar and Jahangir, A Study of Family Groups*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 1999, p. 6.

[16] Ali, M. Athar, *The Apparatus of Empire*, Delhi, 1985, *The Apparatus of Empire, Awards of ranks, offices and titles to the Mughal nobility (1574-1658)*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1985, pp. 41-90.

fluctuations in the number of the nobility and in the political currents of this period, *Iranis* maintained their hold as the only major faction of Shahjahan's nobility. There were 93 *Iranis* in all out of 342 mansabdars in the first phase (1628-36). During 1637-41, when a considerable decline may be seen in the overall strength, they improved their position and numbered 75 out of 255. In the third phase (1642-58), out of 448 mansabdars, 132 were *Iranis*.

It is preserved in the travelogues that the classes of nobility were also divided into different types on the basis of region like there were two kinds of Turkish soldiers found in India, those of Asia, to whom the name *Turk* is given, and those of Europe, who are mostly from Constantinople, which has been called *Rumis* both by Indians and Portugues.[17]

The Afghans who originally hailed from the valley of the Sulaiman Range[18] were divided into Indian *Pathans* and the *Vilayati Pathans* of *Roh* residing in the hilly regions beyond the Indus and to the West of it. The Indian or *Hindustani Pathan* had established themselves all over India and were considered inferior to the *Vilayati Pathan*. *"In spite of these dissensions they all are one race, descended from an ancient prince called Pasto (Pushtu)."*[19] Their language is different from Indian speech as they are believed of Mahomedan faith. Yet they differed in their sects, some venerate Muhammads, others 'Ali, others Usman', and others some other disciple of the false prophet.[20]

The *Afghans* had a say in the political life of India since the days of the sultans of Delhi. Under Balban, the Khaljis and Tughlaqs, they were trusted for their bravery and were favoured by the rulers. However, they really came to the limelight during the Sayyid period, when the Lodhi Afghans ultimately acquired real authority.[21]

Right from the days of Babur down to Akbar, there had been an almost constant armed tussle between the Mughals and the Afghans. Akbar had no trust in them due to his bitter experience.[22] But they rose to eminence during Jahangir's period.[23] Khan-e- Jahan Lodhi came so close to the emperor that he had no rivals at

---

[17] Jarric, *op. cit.*, p. 174.
[18] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol I, p. 92
[19] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol II, p. 426.
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] Joshi, Rita, *The Afghan Nobility and the Mughals (1526-1707)*, Vikas Publications, New Delhi, 1985, pp. 21-32.
[22] *Ibid.* pp. 32-82.
[23] *Ibid.* pp. 89-114.

the court.

Shahjahan started his regime with a normal, favourable policy towards the Afghans. In 1628-36, they were 37 out of 342, but thereafter a gradual decline in their overall strength can be seen. In the second phase (1637-41), their number was 24 out of 255. Similarly, they suffered a decline in the last phase as they numbered only 38 out of 448 mansabdars.

The term "Mughal" was the common epithet which denoted the entire foreign element in the Muslim population of Hindustan. Originally it stood for the house of Timur and their followers. Bernier says, *"To be considered a Mogol, it is enough if a foreigner have a white face and profess Mohametanism", such as Persians, Turks, Arabs and Uzbeks.*[24]

Hindu society during the period under review was caste-ridden and based on the traditional *Varnashrama Dharma*. It is a system of hereditary social ranking associated with Hinduism, which governs social relations and the distribution of power in Hindu society. It is both a cultural and economic system of stratification.

This caste system originated from racial pride and colour prejudice which became the dominant feature of the society.[25] The caste system was originally a trade guild, like the guilds of Medieval Europe, crystallized by centuries of custom. Each caste has it dharma or duties.[26] Absolutely speaking, it was racial in origin, regional in tenacity, occupational in convenience, which proved a stereotyped characteristic.[27] The link of the caste system or Hindu social chain were so strongly and ingeniously forged that nothing was able to break them.[28]

The four principal castes among the Hindus are the *Brahman*, the *Kshatriya*, the *Vaishya* and the *Sudra*.[29] Tavernier found seventy-two castes among Hindus that

---

[24] Bernier, *op. cit.*, pp. 3, 48.

[25] Barbosa, Duarte, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, English tr. and ed. Mansel Longworth Dames,1918-21, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi (rpt. 1989), Vol I, pp. 109-14.

[26] Ovington, John, *A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689 by J. Ovington*, ed., H.G. Rawlinson, Oxford University Press, London, 1929, Asian Educational Services. New Delhi, rpt., 1994, p. 168.

[27] Shah, K. T., *The Splendour that was India; A Survey of Indian Culture and Civlization*, Taraporevala Sons and Co. Bombay, 1930, pp 194-96.

[28] Dubois, A. J. A., *Hindu, Customs, Manners and Ceremonies*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1906. p. 347.

[29] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 94.

could be reduced to four principal castes.[30] Careri observed eighty-four tribes (castes) among Hindus.[31]

The *Brahmans* were the highest caste whose main function was to study, teach, perform *pujas*, offer sacrifices and render advice administration.[32] The *Brahmans* were divided into ten several sects, some of them were known as *Marathas*, *Telanga*, *Canara*, *Drovaras* and *Guzaratti*.[33] Besides, the secular Brahmans there were religious or monastical *Brahmans*, who were called *Jogis*. Some of the *Brahmans* were very ingenious good astronomers, familiar with the course of stars, and usually prepare to foretell the weather. They reckon eclipses very clearly and they also do a great deal of fortune telling. They were kept at court by the king.[34]

The *Kshatriyas* formed the warrior class and their primary duty was the protection of the people.[35] They had been created to maintain the divine order and their function was regarded to be of great importance.[36] The class of *Rajput*, lives in the hill country, and is excellent soldiers, but many of them have nevertheless been brought into subjection by the king and his father.[37] Economically, the *Kshatriyas* belonged to the prosperous section of society; paid well in the army and getting tax relief as officers of the state, the *Kshatriya* led a life of ease and luxury. During the times of distress, a *Kshatriya* was allowed to adopt the *Vaishya's* mode of living.

Primarily, the *Vaishyas* was an agriculturist, cultivation and cattle rearing were his main occupation.[38] At the end of Vedic period, there began a capitalist economy, and this class occupied a great importance. They have their relation with the foreign merchant and internal business also.[39]

The status of the three classes was traditional. But the *Shudras* in religion and social matters guided by their own tradition and usage. He may attain higher caste in another birth only after being mild and servitude.[40] In a more realistic manner, the

---

[30] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 142.
[31] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 254.
[32] Linschoten, *op. cit.*, p. 247, Fryer, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
[33] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 255.
[34] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
[35] Fryer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 444.
[36] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 255.
[37] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 77.
[38] Bhattacharya, S. C., *Some Aspects of Indian Society*, Calcutta, 1978, p. 110.
[39] Ovington, *op. cit.*, p.165, Thevenot *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89.
[40] Rawlinson, H.G., *India: A Short Cultural History*, Cressett, London: 1965, p. 21.

Arthasastra enumerates the *Shudras'* occupation as service of the twice-born, agriculture, cattle rearing, trade and the profession of the artisan and actor.[41] There were the people called *Antyaja*, who followed *Shudras* for rendering various kinds of services, who are not reckoned amongst any caste but only as members of a certain craft or profession.[42]

Tavernier writes, *"The remainders of the people, who do not belong to any of these four castes, are called Pauzecour."*[43] The *Panchamas* was the fifth caste with their innumerable division of untouchable and unapproachable. The vast majority of origins of India belong to the fifth caste and these together with the *Sudra* form the bulk of Hindu population.[44]

Some of the lower caste Hindus, notably in Bengal and certain other parts had been converted into Islam and some high castes in the Punjab and Kashmir had in the same manner been compelled to abandon their ancestral religion. Several new sub-castes had come into existence during this period such as the *Kazis*, the *Teshkhani* and the *Agha*, sub-castes among the *Brahmans* of Kashmir, *Munshis* among those of Gujarat, *Qanungo* and *Raizada* among the Kayastha and *Bakhshis* and *Mehta* among the first three higher castes in several parts of the country.[45] Babur in his memoirs says that another good thing in Hindustan is that it has unnumbered and endless workmen of every sort of work and for everything which has done that work or that thing from father to son.[46]

The hereditary character of the profession and the scant responsibility of their jobs led them to live a group life of isolation and gave them a close knit character of caste; also it divided the Hindu society into compartments.

---

[41] Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p. 157.
[42] Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
[43] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 145.
[44] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-14.
[45] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 256.
[46] Babur, Zahiruddin Muhammad, *BaburNama*, Tr. Annette Susannah Beveridge, Oriental, New Delhi, 1922, rpt. 1979, Vol II, p. 520.

Food and Drink

During the period under study the people in India were both vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian. There is a general misconception prevalent that the Hindus were pure vegetarian and the Muslims non-vegetarian. But there are many instances in the accounts of the foreign travellers that shed much light on some sects of Hindus being non-vegetarian in taste.

Among the Hindu castes, the *Brahmans* were strictly vegetarian. Such strictness in food habit cannot be seen in the other three castes of the Hindu *Varnashrama Dharma*. Some of the sects of the above three castes followed the non-vegetarian pattern of food habit as reported by our travellers also.

Pelsaert writes that some sects of *Kshastriyas* were not so strict in their belief and ate goat's or sheep's flesh.[47] The king of Vijayanagar himself followed the non-vegetarian food habit. The Portuguese traveller Nuniz writes,

> *"These kings of Bisnagar (Vijayanagar) eat all kinds of things, but not the flesh of oxen or cows, which they never kill in all the country, because they worship them. They eat mutton, pork, venison, partridge, hares, doves, quails, and all kinds of birds and rats and cats and lizards all of which are sold in the market of the city of Bisnagar. Everything has to be sold alive, so that each one may know what he buys – this atleast so far as concerns games – and there are fish from rivers in large quantities."*[48]

The population of Northern India was comprised of Muslims and the food habit of a Muslim is generally non-vegetarian.[49] Aristocracy and the nobility classes who represented the Muslim higher class had an extra liking for non-vegetarian items which can be guessed from the dishes prepared in their kitchens.

All of the great Mughal Emperors maintained a well-organised and expensive royal kitchen, with a large number of officials, big and small, and their subordinate

---

[47] Pelsaert, op. cit., p. 76.

[48] Sewell, Robert, *A Forgotten Empire*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1924, First Indian Edition, 1962, p. 375.

[49] Roe, Thomas, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India, 1615-19*, ed. Sir William Foster, New and Revised edition, Oxford University Press, London, 1926, p. 92.

staff. The Muslim nobles were accustomed to lavish meals. Twenty dishes were served at the tables of the nobles at a time and sometimes the number went even beyond fifty.[50] Pelsaert refer to the diet of the Muslim upper classes thus, *"The food consists of birinj, aeshalia, polleb (yellow, red, green or black), zueyla, dupiaza, also roast meats and various other good courses, served on very large dishes, with too little butter and too much spice for our taste......"*[51]

On special festive occasions the banquets and feasts of the nobility were conspicuous for their grandeur and the variety of food as well as other necessary requirements. On an average, each guest was served with twenty to fifty rich dishes. However, it can be undoubtedly asserted that there might have been huge wastage of good food on such joyful occasion, although vast crowd of menials, servants and beggars was always at hand to partake of such leavings.

The Muslims followed the prohibition of their religion with regard to food, e.g. it was forbidden to take pork and some other flesh food or take the flesh of an animal, not properly slaughtered. But for these restrictions, they were generally free to cook and eat whatever and wherever they liked. Meat of different kinds was generally taken on all occasions. Sometimes adulterated meat was also sold.[52] The dining table appears to have been very simple without the use of napkins or table cloths.[53]

Emperor Akbar was very fond of dainty dishes of different varieties. In the course of twenty- four hours his majesty eats but once, and leaves off, before he is fully satisfied; neither is there any fixed time for this meal, but the servants have always so far ready that in the space of an hour, after the order has been given, a hundred dishes are served up."[54] The dishes prepared in the royal kitchen of Akbar can be categorised under three broader heads.[55]In *Sufiyana*[56] dishes meat was not

---

[50] Fazl, Abul, *Ain-i-Akbari*, English Tr. Blochmann, revised by Philliot, Vol. I, (reprint– first published, 1927), Calcutta, 1965; H.S. Jarret, revised by J.N. Sarkar, Vol. II & III (2nd edition- first published; 1949), Delhi, 1965. Vol. I, p. 57.

[51] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 68. 'Birinj' and 'Dupiaza' have already been described above in connection with Akbar's kitchen. 'Polleb' may be a perversion of Pullao. 'Aeshalia' may mean spiced meat, and 'zueyla' refers to spiced wheaten cakes.

[52] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

[53] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

[54] *Ain*, *op. cit.*, Vol I, p. 59.

[55] *Ibid*, p. 61.

[56] *Ibid*, pp. 61-62 and 64-65.

used. Second variety was prepared meat, rice, etc. The dishes of third category were prepared with meat and different kinds of spices.

Under Jahangir and Shahjahan the trend of preparation of sumptuous dishes continued in the royal kitchen. Under Aurangzeb, who was a man of simple tastes and habits, the traditional magnificence of the royal kitchen might have dimmed to a remarkable extent.[57] From Manucci's account it is however clear that emperor Aurangzeb was not altogether devoid of the fondness for delicious dishes, and he also appears to have maintained a costly kitchen. "*Every day one thousand rupees are disbursed for the expenses of the king's kitchen, and the officials are required to furnish there from all that is necessary. They have to lay before the Prince a fixed number of ragouts and different dishes in vessels of China porcelain placed on gold stands.*"[58]

The middle and upper classes invariably used wheat flour, boiled rice and cooked vegetables of various sorts.[59] Hindus, in general being vegetarians, confined themselves to pulses, curd, butter, oil, milk[60] and its several preparations as *khir* and *khowa.* [61] Ghee and cheese were also freely used by them.[62] Curd or *dahi* was usually taken at noon.[63]

The favourite dish of the Muhammadans was meat in its several preparations. They freely took beef, mutton, fish, flesh of goats, sheep and other beasts and birds of prey.[64] With this were mixed *achars*, spices, cloves, cinnamon, pepper and many other condiments to increase the flavour and met their appetite.[65] They had a special taste for *achars* of mangoes[66] and cloves.[67] The *chappatis* of the rich made of fine

---

[57] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 237. Here he refers to the Emperor's earning his bread by his own means.
[58] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 332.
[59] *Ain*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 64-65.
[60] Monserrate, Father Antonio, *Mongolicae legationis Commentarius*, ed., John S. Hoyland (tr.) and S.N. Banerjee (annotator). Commentary of Father Monserrate, 1922, Asian Publishers, Jalandhar, 1993, p. 8, Mandelslo, John Albert De, *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India (1638-1639)*, ed. M.S. Commissariat, Oxford University Press, London, 1931, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1995, p. 68, Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 190.
[61] Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[62] Della Valle, Pietro, *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, 1623-24, ed. Edward Grey, Hakluyt Society, London, 1892, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, rpt. 1991, Vol. II, p. 328.
[63] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 354, Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 183.
[64] Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p. 68, Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 250, Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p.43.
[65] Linschoten, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 229, Manrique, Fray Sebastien, *Travels of Fray Sebastien Manrique, 1629-1643*, ed., C.E. Luard & Father H. Hosten, Hakluyt Society, London, 1926, Vol. II, p. 109.
[66] Fryer, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 384.
[67] *Ibid.*

white flour kneaded with 15% ghee[68] were called '*roghuni*'.[69] When mixed with sugar it tasted like palm cake.[70] On special occasions white loaves kneaded with milk and butter and seasoned with fennel and poppy seeds were prepared. Sometimes their bread was made of *khuskah*.[71]

The vegetarian dishes generally meant for Hindus were of a special quality containing a major portion of butter, several species of pulses, herbs, vegetables and rice particularly '*birinj*'. Detailed list of various vegetables, meats and sweet dishes are provided in Ain.[72] Similarly, Muhammadans prepared rich and aromatic *birinjes* as *qabuli, duzdbiryan, qimah, palao* and pudding of rice mixed with almonds and raisins and strewn with butter and pepper.

Sweet dishes consisted of *halwa*, sweetmeats and comfits prepared from refined sugar and *faluda*. Various conserves of water melons, grapes, lemons, oranges[73] perfumed with rose water, musk and grey ambergris were also kept ready.

The flesh of domesticated and wild animals and birds roasted, fried and made into soup, was their daily food. Patridges, ducks and hares, when available, too, formed part of their dishes.[74] An idea of the variety of dishes served at a highly placed Muhammadan's dinner can be had from the description of Asaf Khan's banquet to Sir Thomas Roe[75] and that of a Governor of Ahmedabad to Mandelslo.[76]

The lower section comprising Hindus and Muslims in society depended on simple food.[77] *Khichari* was the common food of the lower class that has been referred to by almost all travellers.[78] Pelsaert describes it as composed of green pulse mixed with rice and cooked with water over a little fire. Usually a little butter and salt

---

[68] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol I, p. 61.
[69] Manrique, *op. cit.*, Vol II, p. 188. Roghuni is bread with a great deal of ghee.
[70] *Ibid.*
[71] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 61.
[72] *Ibid*, p. 59.
[73] Laval, Francois Pyard, *The Voyage of Francois Pyard of Laval to the East Indies, The Maldives, The Moluccas and Brazil*, English tr. Albert Gray, (Assisted by H.C.P. Bell), London, 1887, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 2000, Vol. I, p. 328.
[74] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 252.
[75] Purchas, Samuel, *Hakluyt Posthumus or Purchas his Pilgrimes, Contayning A History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and Others*, Glasgow, James MacLehose, 1905. Vol. IV, p. 421.
[76] Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
[77] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 249.
[78] Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, pp. 64 & 263, Tavernier, *op. cit.*, p. 124, Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 183. *Khichari* seems to have been more common in eastern and southern India.

were added to it.[79] Khichri of bajra (a mixture of split peas and millet boiled together) was the peculiar food. The Gujaratis also called it *Laziza*.[80]

Wheat, however, was the primary food of the people of the North who ate *chappatis* of wheat or barley flour dipped in a little butter.[81] The staple food of the generality of the people in the morning was limited to *jawar* or *bajra*[82] flour kneaded with brown sugar and water.[83] There was a light refreshments in the afternoon in the form of some parched pulse or other grains.[84] The middle class, comprising shopkeepers, traders, merchants, brokers and bankers, were well off. They took their meals thrice daily, viz., at 8 or 9 in the morning, 4 or 5 in the afternoon and 8 or 9 at night.[85]

Indians baked their loaves called *chappatis* on iron plates[86], a frying pan[87] or on an oven over a fire of cow-dung instead of fuel.[88] The utensils used in Hindu kitchens, as plates, cups, water jugs, candlesticks, etc., were all made of brass or bronze, as these had to be scrubbed clean every time they were used. Linschoten saw people at Goa drink out of a '*copper kan*'; but they used earthenware[89] for cooking purposes. The utensils used in Muslim kitchens were either earthenware[90] or made from copper. The Mughal kings generally used gold or silver utensils[91] and were fond of precious China and glassware. Aurangzeb contented himself with earthen or copper vessels. The copper utensils used in the royal kitchens were treated with tin every fortnight, whereas those for the princes were only done once a month.[92]

Hindus called their kitchen *chauka*, habitually rubbed over with *cow-dung*, was reserved for cooking meals and none was allowed to enter with shoes on.[93] Cooking was never entrusted to anybody except a high-caste Brahman or to a member

---

[79] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
[80] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Vol. I, p. 419.
[81] Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p. 64, Della Valle, *op. cit.*, pp. Vol. II, 328-30, Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 70.
[82] *Ain*, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 240, Della Valle, *op. cit.*, pp. Vol. II, 328-30.
[83] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
[84] *Ibid.*
[85] Ovington, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-85, Tavernier *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 324.
[86] *Ain*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 61.
[87] Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p. 68, Della Valle, *op. cit.*, pp. 328-30.
[88] Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
[89] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 356.
[90] Linschoten, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 262.
[91] *Ain*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 59.
[92] *Ibid.*
[93] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 87.

of their own caste.[94] They took care to confine themselves to home-made dishes and abstained as far as possible from using any edible cooked in the market.[95] They would prefer to go without meals than to accept a dish defiled by the touch of a low caste[96] person or that of a non-Hindu. Hindus usually took two meals a day.[97] Cleanliness was an important factor in Hindu's kitchen.[98]

The travellers did not fail to note that after their morning wash the Hindus would sit down on a piece of mat or fine cloth (in case of the rich) spread over ground rubbed over with cow-dung[99] and mutter their prayer. Bathing was a requirement before meals.[100]

In case of ordinary people, the leaves of the trees stitched together with rushes (*patal*) were placed before them to serve as plates.[101] The diner rubbed the *patal* with a little salt and butter, over which were poured rice boiled without salt with some vegetables and curd.[102] As soon as they had finished their meals, the leaves were removed and the ground rubbed afresh.[103] In the case of *rajas* and other rich men the food was brought from the kitchen in bowls or vessels of silver or gold.[104] They begin with taking rice of their choice and placed it in a large dish "adding some stew to it". Next they partook of vegetables and other dishes according to taste and mixing a part of them with rice, ate them in small morsels.[105] Table manners required not to use one's left hand or to lick the fingers.[106] Wives did not make it a custom to join their husbands at table, but took meals separately.[107]

There was not so much importance attached to the formalities by the Muslims. Their kitchen and table manners were quite simple as they were free to cook and eat wherever and whatever they liked, except the flesh of swine.

---

[94] Laval, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 377.
[95] *Ibid.*
[96] Ovington, *op. cit.*, p 184.
[97] Laval, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 377.
[98] Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 184.
[99] Laval, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 377, Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 76, Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 41-42.
[100] Laval, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 377, Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
[101] Della Valle, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 327, Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 60.
[102] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 42.
[103] Laval, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 391.
[104] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 41.
[105] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
[106] De Laet, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-92.
[107] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 42.

A *dastarkhwan* was spread on the floor and dishes arranged thereon.[108] The whole family sat around and partook of the dishes jointly. The butler placed before each guest a round dish and a portion of food and covered it with fig or other leaves.[109] No napkins were used and even the procedure of washing was not always adhered to.[110] The more well-to-do among them used a superior embroidered silken '*dastarkhwan*' with artificial flowers of gold and silver. They sometimes made use of spoons[111], though this was not the usual custom.

As water is a universal drink it is preferred primarily for drinking purpose in every age and clan. The importance of water for drinking was same during the sixteenth and the seventeenth century when we come across the contemporary travel accounts. Sometimes depending on the situation when there is a scarcity of drinking water its importance even increases manifolds. Caesar Frederick writes, "*There was not any want of Bread none of Wine: but the .....without water they (wine) will kill a man.*"[112]

There are references where the fondness of pure water is found by the king. The king of Vijayanagar drinks water brought from a spring in the covered and sealed vessels.[113] The bania from Cambay did not drink any wine, nor use any vinegar but only water.[114] While drinking water, the Hindus would not allow the vessel to touch their lips, but would pour water from its straight into their mouth from a distance.[115] The custom was also observed by Portuguese and Christian Indians.[116]

They use copper pots for drinking purposes. Gold and silver vessels were also used by the rich people for drinking water.[117] The mughal emperor Akbar also quenches his thirst with 'post' or water.[118] The main sources of drinking water were rivers. The Indians were very fond of drinking Ganga water. Baniyas carried Ganga water many hundred miles for drinking purposes as it was said to be pure and free

---

[108] Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
[109] Foster, William (ed.), *Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*, London, 1921, Low Price Publication, Delhi, 1999, p. 96.
[110] Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
[111] Linschoten, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 207.
[112] Purchas, *op. cit.*, Vol. X, p. 112.
[113] *A Forgotten Empire, op. cit.*, p. 356.
[114] Linschoten, *op. cit.*, p. 254.
[115] Laval, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p.72, Linschoten, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 261-262.
[116] Laval, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 73.
[117] *Ibid.* Vol. I, p. 378.
[118] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

from germs.[119] "*The Heathen Indians esteemed the water of the Ganges to be sacred. It is much lighter than other water and yet I have met with those who affirm that it causes Fluxes and that the Europeans boil it first.*"[120]

The Mughal emperors were also fond of Ganga water. Besides rivers there were tanks for storing water for inhabitants who lived far from spring or rivers. Regarding the drinking water in India, Terry writes, "*This ancient drinke of the world is the common drinke of India. It is more sweet and pleasant than ours, and in those hot countries agreeth better with mens bodies than any other liquor.*"[121] On the other hand the drinking water of capital (Delhi) was impure and full of filth which caused fever and inflammation.[122]

Wine drinking was common during the period under study. Drinking of wine was strictly prohibited among the people by the Mughal emperors but used commonly by the aristocratic class.

The most common and perhaps the cheapest drink was the *Tari* or juice of cocoanut, palm or date trees. Pleasant in taste and flavor, it was drunk with pleasure throughout India[123] Cocoa juice was the principal ingredient for the preparation of liquor which "drinks as deliciously as wine."[124] Indians, particularly the Goanese, liked it much and drank it like water.[125] It was very strong, especially after the third distillation.[126]

Nira was another kind of wine drawn from *arequier* tree and was sweet like milk.[127] *Mahwa* was another tree whose fruit yielded intoxicant liquor.[128] Kherra[129] and Bhadwar[130] were famous for this particular wine which was considered unwholesome, unless boiled.[131] Wine was prepared from refined sugar by a chemical

---

[119] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 226.
[120] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
[121] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 300.
[122] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 354.
[123] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 17, Ovington, *op. cit.*, pp.142-43.
[124] Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
[125] Linschoten, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 47.
[126] *Ibid.*
[127] Ovington, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-43.
[128] De Laet, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-9.
[129] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 97.
[130] De Laet, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-9.
[131] *Ibid.*

process.[132] According to Ovington, a wine called "*Jagre*" was extracted from black sugar.[133] Wines were also manufactured from rice and *toddy*.[134] Some superior kinds of wines were imported from foreign countries like Portugal and Persia. Persian wine manufactured from grapes was smuggled into the Mughal dominions in spite of strict prohibition.

Tea and coffee were taken by quite a good number of people, especially those of the Coromandel Coast.[135] Brahmans and Banias were particularly fond of it. Thevenot asserts that Banias and Brahamans drank nothing but water. "wherein they put coffee and tea."[136] Ovington makes us believe that tea was taken by Banias without sugar or mixed with a small quantity of conserved lemons.[137]

Della Valle tells us that many people in India used liquor called coffee which was made "from a black seed boiled in water which turned it almost into the same colour." Tea and coffee were not taken as beverages but as intoxicants. Certain special vessels made of tin covered with cases and cloth wrappings were used to keep the tea hot.[138] The rich and the nobles took delight in partaking of coffee with their friends. Hamilton was invited by the Nawab of Thatta to "take a dish of coffee" with him.[139] There seem to have been coffee shops, if not coffee-houses, in some of our principal cities, like Delhi and Ahmedabad.

Dress and Ornaments

Dress occupies an important position in the society by identifying a culture, religion and even a country. The famous British poet and playwright, William Shakespear (1564-1616) writes: 'The apparel oft proclaims the man'. Clothing is one of the basic necessities of every human being which distinguishes him from animals.

---

[132] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 253.
[133] Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 142.
[134] *Ibid.*
[135] Laval, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 202.
[136] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
[137] Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 180.
[138] Laval, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 202.
[139] Hamilton, Alexander, *A New Account of the East Indies, Being the Observations and Remarks of Captain Alexander Hamilton, 1688-1723*, ed. Sir William Foster, London, 1739, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1995, Vol. I, p. 119.

All the foreigners who visited India during the period under study or even before and after the concerned period never failed to notice the dressing of the people of every section for the reason of their sights being unfamiliar to them and their readers. There was a variety in the dressing of Medieval Indian society that impressed the foreigners who came to visit India.

The native dress of Surat attracted the early sixteenth century Italian traveler, Pietro Della Valle to such an extent that he cannot escape writing. 'I was so taken with the simplicity and grace of this Indian dress, which looked excellent on a horseman with scimeter girt on, buckler hanging at the shoulder belt, and a curiously-shaped, short and broad dagger tied with tasseled cords to the belt, that I had a complete outfit made for me to take back to Italy.'[140]

Broadly, clothing is affected by the climatic conditions, economic means and social customs. The major part of India is mostly hot throughout the year except for some hilly places. There was no use of wollen in South India.[141] To suit India's climate, dresses were made of light stuffs. In the winter season, shirts and coats with sleeves and long coats (*qabas*) were used.[142] Shawls too were drapped around the shoulders during the winters. These were obtained from Kashmir and were very costly sometimes as much as hundred and fifty rupees each.[143]

Dresses occupied fairly a prominent place in the life of the royalty. From the accounts of the early sixteenth century travellers we find the glimpses of the clothes worn by the Hindu kings of South India. Paes remarks, "The King was clothed in certain white cloths embroidered with many roses in gold, and with a *pateca* of diamonds on his neck of very great value".[144] The Royalty never wore any apparel more than once.[145] So were the Mughal emperor Humayun and Akbar who generally changed their dresses daily to match with the colour of the planet of the day.[146] Father Monserrate writes about the dress of Akbar: "His Majesty wore clothes of silk

---

[140] Della Valle, Pietro, *Pietro's Pilgrimage*, Wilfrid Blunt (ed.), James Barrie, London, 1953, p. 242.
[141] *A Forgotten Empire, op. cit*, p. 254.
[142] Tavernier, *op. cit.* Vol I, p. 132.
[143] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 403, Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
[144] *A Forgotten Empire, op. cit*, p. 243.
[145] *Ibid*, p. 363.
[146] Badaoni, Abdul Qadir, *Muntakhab-ut-Twarikh*, English Tr. and ed. Vol. I- George S.A. Ranking, Vol. II- W.H. Lowe, (reprint- first published, 1899), Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, 1973, Vol. II, pp. 260-61, 268.

beautifully embroidered in gold. His Majesty's cloak comes down to his knee and his boots cover his ankles completely and (he) wears pearls and gold jewellery."[147]

The dress of Hindu nobles and sardars was slightly different. They used three pieces to cover their bodies, "one round the loins, the other for the head and the third on the shoulders."[148] These were made of "Velvet, Satten, Damaske, Scarlet, or white Bumbast cloth".[149] This was the common dress for well to-do Hindu families. But the Hindu rulers appear to have used a dress similar to that of Muslim nobles.

The dress of the ladies of the Hindu nobles and sardars was very costly and varied according to their status. According to Barbosa they wore white garments of very thin cotton or silk of bright colours, five yards long, one part of which was girt round below and the other part thrown over one shoulder and across their breasts.[150] Describing the dress of these ladies Pietro Della Valle says that these women were clothed with figured silk from the girdle downwards and used a scrap of very pure linen over their shoulders.[151]

On ceremonial occasions the ladies sometimes also used a head dress. Paes, *who* was an eye witness to the celebration of *Mahanavmi* festival at Vijayanagar, writes about the ladies who participated in the function. "They have very rich and fine silk cloths; on the head they wear high caps which they call *collaes*, and on these caps they wear flowers made of large pearls; collars on the neck with jewels of gold very richly set with many emeralds and diamonds and rubies and pearls; and besides this many strings of pearls, and others for shoulder belts; on the lower part of the arms many bracelets, with half of the upper arm all bare, having armlets in the same way all of precious stones; on the waist many girdle of gold and of precious stones, which girdle hang in order one below the other, almost as far drawn as half the thing; besides these belts they have other jewels, and many strings of pearls round the ankles, for they wear very rich anklets even of greater value than the rest".[152]

---

[147] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

[148] Major, R. H. (ed.), *India in the Fifteen Century*, Hakluyt Society, London, 1857, Deep Publications, Delhi, rpt., 1974, p. 9.

[149] Mahalingam, T. V., *Administration and Social Life under the Vijayanagar*, University of Madras, Madras, 1975, Part II, p. 61.

[150] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol I, p. 207.

[151] Della Valle, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 257-58.

[152] *A Forgotten Empire*, *op. cit.*, p. 263. These ornaments could still be seen on the body of the ladies, although now made of silver, glasses, stones and other materials.

The use of shoes by the women of nobles and other higher class was also common. According to Nicolo Di Conti, "In some places the women have shoes made of thin leather ornamented with gold and silk".[153]

The women-slaves appointed on lower posts than maids, attired in costly silken garments.[154] Principal women servants at the court were found clad in valuable garments.[155] Thus, though they were inferior servants, they had no problem in procuring rich and abundant clothes to wear. Even the damsels kept clothes in a large number.[156] Eunuchs in the houses of the nobles could have as fine clothes as their masters had.[157] Thomas Roe saw the attendants in the train of an ambassador wearing costly and rich clothes.[158]

Some of the nobles did not provide new clothes, or better one, to their household servants. They paid them against their services in worn out clothes.[159] Slaves were kept by the Portuguese in Goa to serve them inside and outside of the houses. Contradictory descriptions are given by the contemporary writers about their dresses. Linschoten had written that because of excessive heat the masters (i.e., Portuguese) and their male and female attendants used linen dresses which they could change every day.[160] Contrary to this Della Valle saw the servants and slaves at Goa very ill clad.[161] Careri made no different description about the clothing of slaves and servants under the Portuguese of Goa.[162]

Slaves at Surat used clothes of white linen, 'which though fine is bought very cheap'.[163] Though most of the household servants got rupees three in a month as their remunerations, but they could wear white linen and had sufficient quantity of food.[164] Here we may infer that most of the times slaves and servants in the service of rich persons could have clothes in a satisfactory manner and exception might have been there, noted by Pelsaert.

Common people in Malabar went quite naked, only using a cloth to cover private parts of their body. Even the King's clothing was found very brief. They could

---

[153] Major, R. H., *op. cit.*, p. 23.
[154] Manrique, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 215-19.
[155] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 336-38.
[156] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 311.
[157] Ansari, M.A., *European Travellers under the Mughals (1580-1627)*, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, 1975, p. 129.
[158] Purchas, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 267.
[159] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.
[160] Purchas, *op. cit.*, Vol. X, p. 233.
[161] Della Valle, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 157.
[162] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 188.
[163] Della Valle, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 42.
[164] *European Travellers under the Mughals*, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

be distinguished from the common man by the ornaments of precious metals.[165] Manucci has set forth in detail the dresses of labourers, soldiers and other ordinary men and women in general. The men's clothing were comprised of a cloth to bind around their head, a string round their middle to which they attached a fragment piece of cloth about the size of a napkin to cover the middle part of the body like a *lang*. Besides, a sheet like cloth was used to cover the body, which served in the night as bed-sheet. Sometimes, a pillow was also in their use. Moat of men, except covering their private parts, remained naked and free to go everywhere.[166] Women used a cloth of red or white cotton binding on their girdle like a petticoat. Another cloth was *pane* or *panjam* to put on head and shoulders and just to bind round the waist, was in common use.[167]

Another reference about the dresses of common people is found in the page of Thevenot. He wrote that shirts partly open or open from top to bottom were in vogue among all men. These shirts resembled with Persian *qabas* or gown like dresses. A kind of coat *arcaluck* (arqaliq) was put on. Those who could not afford woollen garments, they made jacket stuffed of cotton. *Qabas* was generally made of cotton cloth which was easy to maintain.[168] Moors (Muslims) distinguished themselves by putting a *coif* or head attire. Breeches or shalwar were also used. Those who were of ordinary means could wear clothes of cotton, but those who wanted to give an impression of richness wore silk.[169] The rich persons rarely used white cotton and preferred silk. It makes obvious that white cotton was common among poor and common people.[170] During the last years of the sixteenth century, Brahmans were found almost naked just using a small cloth bound round their waist.[171] The English pioneer Fitch saw in Golconda both men and women putting on a little cloth.[172] In Banaras too, the people wore a small cloth round their middle keeping other parts of the body naked. They wore quilted caps and quilted gown in winter. Though Bengal produced a huge quantity of silk and cotton goods, but the inhabitants had no interest in using more clothes than necessary; that was a small piece round their waist. Be

---

[165] Tavernier, *op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 197.
[166] Manucci, *op. cit.* Vol. III, pp. 39-40.
[167] *Ibid.*
[168] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
[169] *Ibid.*
[170] *Ibid*, pp. 50-51.
[171] Purchas, *op. cit.*, Vol. X, p. 256.
[172] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

rich people lived in the same manner.[173]

In the early years of seventeenth century nothing did change in respect of clothing of poor masses. The inhabitants of Sind could keep horses, camels and weapons, but were not interested in having clothed in abundance.[174] *Kashmiris* could not afford cotton clothes which were quite dear in Kashmir. But their clothing consisted of woolen gowns and clouts, though poverty prevents them to change garments frequently.[175]

Rich and poor in Calicut went around naked, only wearing silk and cotton cloth in the middle.[176] This indicates the capability of rich persons to use the silken garments, but due to the climatic conditions they might have avoided them. In South India, even Kings and princes did not wear much clothes or preferred cotton clothes than silks,[177] which was due to the excessive heat in the region.[178]

In Gujarat also cotton, coarse and fine, was used depending on the income of a man. A long drawer and a head dress – white and clean, was in popular usage in both communities.[179] Poor Oriya ladies contended themselves with a *lungee*, or a white cloth made fast about their waist.[180] The *banjaras* women wore white or painted piece of calico from their waist downwards.[181]

The diamond miners of Golconda were forced to wear a little cloth only to conceal their private parts when they digged out diamonds, so that they could not steal the precious stones.[182] At Masulipatam, though the boatmen used gold rings in their ears, but their dresses were confined to nothing but a clout girt about the middle with a sash.[183]

Hindus and Muslims wore dresses alike during the epoch of this study with a little difference. Most of them lived naked. The same situation is not only told by the seventeenth century travellers but also in *Ain-i-Akbari* that men and women in Bengal

---

[173] *Ibid.*
[174] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 218.
[175] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.
[176] Della Valle, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 360.
[177] *Pietro's Pilgrimage*, *op. cit.*, p. 281.
[178] Della Valle, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 379-80.
[179] *European Travellers under the Mughals*, *op. cit.*, p. 106.
[180] Bowrey, Thomas, *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal, 1669-1679*, ed., R.C. Temple, Hakluyt Society, Cambridge, 1905, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1993, p. 208.
[181] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 40.
[182] *Ibid*, p. 46.
[183] Fryer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 172.

lived contended with a small quantity of clothes.[184] The common dress of the Hindu was *dhoti* and a loin cloth. The Muslims usually appeared to have worn *payjama* (ijar) an ordinary shirt and a cap. Stockings were rarely used but the turban was common among all communities.[185] Hindu ladies could be distinguished from Muslim ladies by wearing *ghaghra*, *lahnga* and *choli* with *dupatta*. Muslim ladies liked breeches (*shalwars*) and shirts.[186] *Sari* and blouse was generally worn by Indian ladies.[187] In Bengal ladies could only wear coarse loin cloth and *sari*, but in Orissa even coarse cloth was not available to them.[188] A short jacket and blouse was also in vogue among poor and rich ladies alike.[189]

Stockings and gloves were avoided because of severe heat.[190] While the rich ones could wear shoes, poor did move without them.[191]

Indian women are always known for their fondness for ornaments. There was no departure from the traditional custom during the Mughal period.[192] All the travellers agree, and this is confirmed by our experience, that ornaments were "the very joy of their hearts."[193] They would deny themselves other necessities but would not forgo ornaments. Ornaments had to be totally abandoned when a woman unfortunately became a widow.[194]

Ladies were accustomed to the use of ornaments from their very childhood. The ears of both sexes and noses of girls only were pierced through at a very tender age. Ornaments of gold, silver or brass, according to the means of the parents, were thrust through the pierced holes which grew wider and wider with age.[195] Every child was adorned with a silver or gold chain with bells tied round the waist and anklets round the legs.

Ladies bedecked every limb of their bodies from head to foot with different types of ornaments. Abul Fazl enumerates 37 in his list in the Ain. Of the 5 ornaments

---

[184] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 122.
[185] Ojha, Pran Nath, *North Indian Social Life during Mughal Period*, Delhi, 1975, p. 26.
[186] *Ibid*, 27-31.
[187] Thevnot, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
[188] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 134-138.
[189] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
[190] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 341, Vol. III, p. 40, Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 52, Careri, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-48.
[191] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol I, p. 193, Thevnot, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
[192] Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 188.
[193] *Ibid.* Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 40.
[194] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 40.
[195] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

allotted to the head, *Chauk* called *Sisphul* by Abul Fazl was raised bell-shaped piece of gold or silver, hollow, and embellished from inside with attachments fastened to the hair over the crown of the head.[196]

Pendants were often worn in the ears. Usually made of gold, silver or copper they hung down from the ears almost touching the shoulders.[197] *Karnphul* (shaped like the flower of Magrela), *Pipal-Patti* (crescent shaped), *Mor Bhanwar* (shaped like a peacock), *Bali* (a circlet) were the different forms of ear-rings. Usually one big and several smaller rings were worn on each ear.[198] Manucci writes, *"There hangs down from the middle of their head in the centre of their forehead a bunch of pearls or precious ornaments of the shape of star, sun or moon or flower beset with glittering jewels."*[199] *Mang Tika* was worn on the parting of the hair to add to its beauty. *Binduli* was another ornament meant for the forehead.

Nose ornaments were unknown in India up to the early medieval period. After the arrival of Muslims in India, it soon became the fashion to put on gold rings ornamented with gems, called *Nath.*[200] The more fashionable ones used a gold or silver nose-pin[201], of the shape of *laung* or a flower-bud.

Around the neck were worn necklaces of gold, pearls and other precious stones which contained five to seven strings of gold beads. Another form of necklace called *Har* was a string of pearls interconnected by golden roses which came down almost to the stomach. Its centre contained a pendant made of diamonds or other precious stones.[202] *Guluband* consisted of a five or seven rose-shaped buttons of gold strung on to silk and worn round the neck.[203]

The upper part of the arms above the elbows were ornamented by armlets, called *Bazuband*, usually two inches wide, inlaid with jewels, diamonds, etc., with a bunch of pearls hung down.[204] They decorated their wrist up to the elbow with

---

[196] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 343.
[197] Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 188.
[198] Hamilton, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 163. Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
[199] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 339-40, Ovington, *op. cit.*, p.188.
[200] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 37, Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
[201] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 192.
[202] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 339-40, *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 313.
[203] Laval, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 380.
[204] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 340.

bracelets called *churis*, usually 10 or 12 in number on each arm.[205] They covered their fingers with rings, usually one for each; the rich studded them with diamonds and sapphires. One of these put on the right thumb was fitted with a looking glass, called *arsi*.[206]

Payal was commonly used for beautifying legs which produced jingling sound when its wearer moved about.[207] *Ghunghru* consisting of small golden bells usually six on each ankle and strung upon silk were worn between the *Tehar* and *Khal Khal*.[208] *Bhank* and *Bichhwah* were the ornaments used for the in step. *Anwat* was the ornament to decorate the big toe.

Men also wore ornaments during the period under study. Muslims were usually against it except that some of them put on amulets. Hindus on the other hand adorned themselves with ear and finger rings.[209]

Economic disparity played an important role in deciding the metal used for ornament by the people. Rich used ornaments made of gold, silver and precious stones. Common people contended themselves with less costly metals or substances.[210] Abul Fazl says ornaments were also made of a special kind of stone found near Rajgarh in Bihar. Elephants' teeth or *ivory* was much used in India.[211] Women wore arm bracelets made of ivory especially in Rajasthan and Cambay. Pearl was used by the Bengali women in the preparation of bracelets.[212] Cloves and other cheap metals were also used by the village people.[213] Ornaments made of rhinoceros' horn were much esteemed in Bengal. Peter Mundy remarks, "*Of this hornes (rhinoceros) they make Cupps, rings and Churees (churi, bracelet), Circle or small loopes, which weomen weare on their wrists, they being of great esteem.*"[214]

---

[205] Laval, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 377.
[206] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 340, Thevenot, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-8.
[207] Hamilton, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 163. They put on their legs valuable metal rings. Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 340.
[208] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 313.
[209] Laval, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 372, Hamilton, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 163. On special occasions Hindus liked to put on necklaces.
[210] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 224.
[211] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 12, Linschoten, *op. cit.*, pp. 1, 61.
[212] Linschoten, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 136.
[213] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
[214] Mundy, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 171.

Housing

The foreign travellers of the sixteenth and the seventeenth century had given a very good description of housing where ever they went in India. Although they went to different places at different period of time but one thing they commonly observed that there was a vast difference in the housing system of rich and the poor's which was obvious from the structure of the houses and the materials used in building a house. Some regional variations are discernible in spite of the fact that certain basic features of houses of the rich, ordinary and poor remained more or less common.

Father Monserrate provides us a general description of the houses of rich and the poor in Mughal towns, as follows.[215] The houses of the rich had "*ornamental gardens in their courtyards and tanks and fish-ponds which are lined with tiles of various colours*", artificial springs and foundations and pathways "paved with brickwork or marble". They adorned their roofs and arched ceilings with carvings and paintings. Windows were not provided for, "*an account of the filth of the streets*". Moreover, "such houses show nothing in their façade or entrances could attract the passerby, concealing entirely what lay inside". He adds that the Hindus ("Brahmanae") had another style of architecture but does not elaborate upon it and simply says that they decorated their houses with stone and wooden status and sculptures of their deities and fabulous creatures. As for the common people, he merely says that they "*lived in lowly huts and cottages.*"

The major description of Mughal towns such as Agra, Delhi, Lahore and Surat given by other European travellers largely match and supplement these accounts.

There was a class of affluent persons but they did pose themselves to be very poor. There were some rich merchants on the coast of Gingalee who concealed their wealth because they feared the plunder of their wealth by the invaders and confiscation of property and goods by the governer.[216] Merchants and shopkeepers of Surat lived in huts and small houses as they did not want to display their riches for

[215] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, p. 219.
[216] Bowrey, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

fear of theft or exaction by the government officers.[217] Hindu of Golconda also concealed their wealth for fear of its being heavily taxed by the local authorities.[218]

The aristocracy, in general, tried to imitate, as far as possible, the patterns of the royal palaces, while constructing their own mansions. The royal palaces were, indeed, lofty and magnificent structures with numerous apartments set apart for different purpose, e.g., drawing rooms, dressing rooms, bath rooms, retiring rooms opening into enclosed court yards, the female apartments called the '*Harem*', etc.[219] All the walls were well-ornamented with different kinds of precious stones, fine painting and various other devices.[220] Bernier speaks about the Royal Palace at Delhi thus, "The citadel, which contains the Mehalle or Seraglio, and the other royal apartments....., is round or rather semi-circle.... The walls of the citadel, as to...their antique and round towers, resemble those of the city, but being partly of brick, and partly of red stone which resembles marble, they have a better appearance. The walls of the fortress likewise excel those of the town in height, strength and thickness...Except on the side of the river, the citadel is defended by a deep ditch faced with hewn stone, filled with water, and stocked with fish...."[221] Thevenot's description of the Royal palace at Agra is even more lifelike when he writes, "The King's palace is in the Castle. It contains three Courts adorned all round with Porches and Galleries that are painted and Gilt, nay there are some places covered with plates of Gold. Under the Galleries of the first Court, there are Lodgings made for the King's Guards. The Officers Lodgings are in the second; and in the third the stately apartments of the King and his Ladies: from whence he goes commonly to a lovely Divan which looks to the River....The Palace is accompanied with five and twenty of thirty other very large ones, all in line, which belong to the Princes and other great Lords of the Court."[222] Elaborate lighting arrangements had been made, in these palaces, with the help of wax-candles, torches, oil-lamps etc.[223]

---

[217] Fryer, *op. cit.* Vol I, p. 278.
[218] Norris, William, *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb (1699-1702)*, ed., Harihar Das, condensed and rearranged, S.C. Sarkar, Calcutta, 1959, pp. 149, 157-158.
[219] Begum, Gulbadan, *Humayun Nama*, Tr. Annette S. Beveridge, Low Price Publications, Delhi, First Published, 1902, Third rpt. 1996, pp. 97-98.
[220] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 232, Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 350-351.
[221] Bernier, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-243.
[222] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
[223] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 51.

The nobles lived in very big and spacious houses with numerous apartments and amenities, e.g., drawing rooms, guest rooms, female's quarters, bath, water tanks, spacious courtyards and handsome subterraneous rooms, furnished with big fans, which served as suitable places for taking rest during the summer. Pelsaert mention these houses as 'noble and pleasant with many apartments'.[224] A good house had also terraces on which the family might sleep during the night.[225] Some of the houses had '*khaskhanas*' meant for retreat during the hot weather, and were also furnished with '*hammams*' of cold and hot water. There were also windows (*khidkis*) for fresh air and light.[226] Houses were well plastered and were white washed, from time to time, with lime mixed with gum, milk and sugar.[227] The houses of the upper classes were also well-decorated with different kinds of furniture, ornamented cots and bedsteads, cushions, mattresses with fine embroidered coverings nicely carpeted floors, etc.[228]

The noble's houses last only for few years because the walls are built with mud instead of mortar. The white plaster of the walls is built with mud instead of mortar. The white plaster of the walls he regarded as very noteworthy, and far superior to anything in Holland.[229] They used unslaked lime, mixed with milk, gum, and sugar into a thin paste. When walls had been plastered with lime, they applied this paste, rubbing it with well-designed trowels until it became smooth, then they polished it steadily with agates, perhaps for a whole day until it became dry and hard and shone like alabaster, to be even used as a looking glass.[230]

The lower strata consisting of common troopers and all that vast multitude of servants and camp followers lived in houses interspersed with those of the nobility and the rich constituting an immense number of small ones (house) built of mud and thatched with straw.[231] They all had thatched roofs "supported by a layer of long, handsome and strong canes: and the clay walls are plastered with a fine white lime." Bernier says further, "*Very few are built entirely of brick or stone and several are*

---

[224] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.
[225] Bernier, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-248, Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.
[226] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 247.
[227] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.
[228] *Ibid.*
[229] *Ibid.*
[230] *Ibid.*
[231] Bernier, *op. cit.*, pp. 245-6. That the wealthy also had thatched roofs for their houses is borne out by the fact that Badauni in Patna in 1571 came across thatched houses, with wood facing constructed at the cost of Rs 30 to 40 thousand.

made only of clay and straw, yet they are airy and pleasant, most of them having courts and garden."[232]

Finch (1611) reports that the houses of nobles and merchants at Agra were built of stone and bricks and had flat roofs while those of the poor were of mud walls covered by thatch that often caused terrible fires.' But he also mentions carved windows and doors in houses at Lahore that were fair and high. Describing houses in Lahore Finch remarks that in most of the houses of "Gentiles" (Hindus) the doors were placed high, six or seven steps above the ground, "so built for more securities and that passengers should not see into their houses."[233] Niccolao Manucci, notices in Lahore buildings as lofty as some having eight stories,[234] which seems rather improbable, though Manucci lived at Lahore for some years.

The house built by Hakim Ali was considered a wonder of the time. It was built beneath the reservoir. The house had bedrooms and rooms for other utilities. Emperor Akbar himself visited the house and for that he along with the Hakim dived into the reservoir to reach the house. After reaching there he changed his clothes, applied perfumes, ate breakfast, read some books and rested for a while. For coming out the house he again put on the lion-sheet (lung) and come out of the reservoir.[235] We have first-hand information from Manrique of the palace like house of Asaf Khan. He writes that on his arrival of the gate of the place of Asaf Khan he was taken into 'a small squire or courtyard, just then occupied by various men at arms'. 'We passed through them to a second door, by which we entered into a lovely and pleasant garden.....watered by sweet, clear water brought by numerous open channels communicating with various reservoirs and fountains. Of these some made attractive bathing-places, being enclosed in gilded and painted houses. Though these were Maumetan baths the principal bath had the walls painted with scenes from the life of that true precursor of Christ in the solitary and wild desert and in the penitential Palace, where, clothed in camel hair and fed on locusts and wild honey, he was preparing himself to baptize the Messiah.....' He adds that from this place he was escorted to the lower palaces built in the centre of this lovely garden and from there

---

[232] *Ibid.*

[233] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 185.

[234] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 186.

[235] Bhakkari, Shaikh Farid, *The Dhakhirat-ul-Khwanin, (A Biographical Dictionary of Mughal Noblemen)*, Tr. Ziyauddin A. Desai, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, First Published 1993, rpt. 2009.Part I, pp. 179-180.

he was led to a 'curious building, well lighted and extremely attractive, as it was lighted all around by a series of casements fitted with the windows of glass of different colours, secondly because, wherever there was no window, it was replaced by an ornament of different kinds of branches and flowers enchasted on the walls in glittering silver, which thus served as a fixed hanging'. The floor of this building was entirely covered with rich and gaily coloured carpets, the bare floor being held unworthy to support the rich portable bedstead which stood in the centre, otherwise than upon such a covering. This bedstead was made entirely of the finest kind and most brilliant colours, which, besides adding to its value, made it most attractive in appearance.[236]

The houses of poor in India were made of mud with low thatched roofs, walled up from all sides, with one single door, without brick flooring or any furniture. They were of same design and shape, and in appearance very cheerless and in rainy season most uncomfortable. But these accounts are superflous, lacking in deep knowledge of climatic conditions and social conditions.

Fitch writes that the houses in Patna were built of earth and covered with straw.[237] Houses in Sonargaon were almost same as in other parts of India.[238] Linschoten found the lodging of poor persons very small and low with the topping of straw.[239] Though the country of Masulipatam was good and fruitful, all houses were made of thatched roofs.[240] At Thatta the houses of the common people differed from other parts of the country. Hence the common people could use mortar also in place of mud.[241] The houses in the villages adjacent to Burhanpur were in no way better than other places. At Ajmer alongwith the mud houses, there were tent houses too in which the royal camp followers used to live.[242] Even the lodging of rich persons at Surat, had huts of canes and mats on the top of terraces, to be used in summers. The servants quarters nearby the houses of the nobles, were made of mud and straw. At Agra, the houses of the poors were in no better condition, and were same as in other parts of the

---

[236] Manrique, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 206-8.
[237] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
[238] *Ibid*, p. 28.
[239] Purchas, *op. cit.*, Vol. X, pp. 247-48.
[240] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
[241] *Ibid*, p. 210.
[242] Purchas, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 443.

country.[243] Terry show the houses of the poors made of straw, thatch and mud.[244] Peter Mundy, who visited the western coast of India (1608-67), came across the houses of the common masses being very small thatched and on floors having a wash of cow dung.[245] Pelsaert ascertained the conditions of the dwellings of common people in the same condition. But in Kashmir he observed the houses of the poors made of pine wood 'the interstices filled with clay', which gave an elegant look and were well ventilated.[246] Though the bazars of Calicut were full of all necessities of life, the houses were all made of mud and thatches of palm.[247]

These houses of the poors remained in the same condition without changes made by the succeding generation. Bernier could see no change in the dwellings of the poor strata. These were 'small ones, built of mud, thatched with straw'. But the thing which amazed him was that the rich persons also constructed huts to be used in summers made of *'Kas-Kanyas'* or *Khas*.[248] About the houses of the persons of low means, Thevnot has also given a similar description as contained in the accounts of the other travellers who visited the country during the seventeenth century. Manucci found the poverty-stricken, humble people living in the huts. Having no furniture and floors used for both sitting and sleeping. Their huts were constructed of earth and pieces of wood bound together with ropes, without much regard to appearance. These wooden posts serve as supporting pillars, and the roof is of thatch.[249] Ovington observed nothing new as far as the huts and dwellings, of meaner sorts were concerned, bamboo and reeds being the chief building material of the poor. Streynshan Master[250] could not see anything different and almost same situation prevailed in Bengal at Masulipatam when he visited these regions. What Hamilton and Careri ascertained was not a novel thing. All these travellers saw the dwellings of the poors made of bamboo, straw, mud or thatches etc.

But Norris speaks in a rather different way. The ambassador writes that though

---

[243] Jourdain, John, *The Journal of John Jourdain 1608-1617, Describing His Experiences in Arabia, India, And The Malay Archipelago*, ed. William Foster, Hakluyt Society, Cambridge, 1905, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, rpt. 1992, p. 163.

[244] *European Travellers under the Mughals, op. cit.*, p. 90.

[245] Mundy, *op. cit.* Vol. III, Part-I, p. 98.

[246] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

[247] Della Valle, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 302-303.

[248] Bernier, *op. cit.*, pp. 227, 246-47.

[249] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 40-41.

[250] Master, Streynsham, *The Diaries of Streynsham Master, (1675-1680)*, ed., R.C. Temple, Published For the Govt. of India, London, 1911, Vol. II, pp. 92-93, 174.

the plains here are very fertile, even then the house and outer walls of the villages are of mud, but 'strong enough to withstand any assault.'[251] In the last days of Aurangzeb's reign, the soldiers were forced to live in mud houses, or huts.[252] Thatta, which was a well-populated town, where were 'fish and furniture in abundance, and incredibly cheap', also hens, sheep, sugar and rice were sold at highly cheap rates, even then all the houses were made of mud and supported by timber.[253] Most of the ware houses of English factors were found made of thatch and mud.

So far as the furniture inside the houses of the poor strata is concerned, the general notion found in the contemporary accounts is that their houses contained a little furniture or sometimes none. Just a few earthen wares to hold water and to cook in, were kept by the poor persons. Most of these houses contained only two beds,[254] one for man and another for his wife. Otherwise the floor was used for sitting both Manucci had described in detail and condition of the houses of the common people. About the houses of the Hindus he wrote that they had no furniture and used to live on the floors of pounded earth, plastered with a wash of cow-dung.[255] Bedsteads were very common among all classes-rich and poor alike.[256] These bedsteads were made of bamboo and cords.[257] Portable beds made of canes, but quite strong, were also in vogue.[258] Fans were used by the poor persons made of leaves of palm and coconut trees.[259]

Important building materials used by the common people were of mud, branches and leaves of the trees, bamboo, canes, and grasses of different types. Reeds were mainly used in Orissa to build houses and huts.[260] In Bengal and at Ajmer also, bamboo served as the chief building material.[261] Manucci and Tavernier observed houses at Patna made of palm-leaves, thatch,[262] but Abul Fazl wrote much earlier that the houses in Patna, for the most part, were roofed with tiles.[263] In Gujrat mostly the

---

[251] Norris, *op. cit.*, pp. 114, 235, 242-43, 251.
[252] *Ibid*, p. 255.
[253] *The English Factories in India, (1618-1669)*, ed., William Foster, Clarendon, Oxford, (1906-27), Vol. 5 (1634-36), p. 124.
[254] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
[255] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 40-41.
[256] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 61, Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
[257] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 168.
[258] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 353.
[259] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 187.
[260] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 138.
[261] *Ibid.* Vol. II, p.134, Vol. III, p. 273
[262] Travernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 86, 100
[263] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol II, p. 164.

houses were made of burnt bricks, tiles and some of them even having stone foundations.[264]

Kashmiris made their houses of wood, which gave an elegant look. Branches of Palm-trees and bamboos were utilized by the Malabaris to construct their dwellings.[265] In south India coconut wood was commonly used for making houses which was easily available in coastal regions.[266] Lower classes in Sind made their houses of poles and covered them with a mixture of straw and mud. Gentiles, or Hindus, were fond of keeping a wash of cow-dung on the floor of their houses. Della Valle described in a somewhat detailed manner the custom of using cow-dung for beautifying the floors of the houses. Out of these descriptions one may infer that the houses made by the common people were of same design and shape during the seventeenth century.

Geographical conditions, economic condition and building materials available are the three important factor on which the building activities depends.

While studying the conditions of housing of the lower strata in the different parts of the Mughal Empire, or out of it, during the seventeenth century, it seems that all of the above mentioned factors are reflected in their building activities. The poor or common people used to make houses according to the climatic conditions by utilizing the material which was easily available to them. India being a tropical country, the dwellings were constructed to get protection from the excessive heat during most of the months of the year. No doubt, during the rainy season or winters they faced hardships but in South India during winter season too, the days are always quite warm, but in extreme north of the country the season comes with bitter cold. The factors that effected the construction of houses, the common masses are as follows:-

Those who lived in coastal areas had all kinds of benefit of palm trees. They made it useful for making the thatch, for roofing their huts and houses, and made out of it wine, oil cords etc. Thus, they could save several expenses.[267]

Abul Fazl wrote that houses of bamboos covered with palm-tree were quite durable.[268] This factor may account for the thatched houses preferred by common and poor persons. Della Valle also corroborated the evidences of Abul Fazl that bamboo

---

[264] *Ibid.* Vol. II, p. 256.
[265] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 100
[266] Saletore, B. A., *Social and Political Life in Vijayanagar Empire (A. D. 1346-A. D. 1646)*, B. G. Paul & Co. Publishers, Madras, 1934, Vol. II, p. 295.
[267] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.
[268] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 134.

houses in Bengal lasted for a long.

Houses having earthen walls, mingled with straw, stood very firm. In case of catching fire, these houses 'could be rebuilt quickly'.[269] Thomas Roe also noted that these houses could be built very easily and in a short period.[270]

The houses in Kashmir, made of wood not only gave a nice look but also seemed like that of the houses of upper strata.[271]

Houses made of reeds and canes etc. were most suitable for the hot climate of India. Because of this reason even some of the rich persons also constructed apartments of *khas* to get relaxed from severe heat of the summers.[272] Sometimes they also got constructed houses of canes and mates on the top of their building, which could be kept cool by sprinkling water in on them.

Cow-dung which was spreaded like a wash over the floors of the homes, meant not only for elegancy and ornamentation, but it was also a cheap remedy against plague.[273] Linschoten, "*Their houses are commonly strawed with Cowe dung, which (they say) killeth Fleas.*"[274]

On the seaports, sometimes, the thatched houses were made temporarily when the ships loaded or unloaded there. Otherwise the huts were burnt and the inhabitants returned to their own houses.[275]

Though the *bazars* of Surat and Thatta were full of all kinds of provisions, which were sold there at cheap rates, even then the houses were built of mud and thatches.[276] This makes obvious that people having food grains on cheap rates, could save money to spend in better housing.

Thus, the common sorts of people did not spend much on the construction of their houses, but utilized what was easily available to them. These houses could be rebuilt or repaired easily. Hence these people can save money to spend on other necessities of life.

---

[269] *European Travellers under the Mughals, op. cit.*, p. 90.
[270] Purchas, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 440.
[271] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
[272] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 247.
[273] Purchas, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 440.
[274] Linschoten, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 226.
[275] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
[276] *English Factories, op. cit.*, Vol. 5 (1634-36), p. 124.

Superstitions and Beliefs

Superstitions are a commonly witnessed phenomenon. They can be seen anywhere, anytime, whether at home, in office or on the way. People of every caste, creed or community are superstitious. Though the forms of superstition may vary, their presence can be felt in every society.

A superstition is a universal phenomenon. Even the people of highly rational West are superstitious. It is an integral part of human society. Superstitions have been prevalent in society since time immemorial. They have their origin in illiteracy, i.e. lack of rational belief, scientific attitude and also lack of faculty to interpret certain events. Its origin can be traced back to prehistoric times when people did not have knowledge and exposure as we do have today.

Superstitions and beliefs were very common in India during the period under study as it is today and it was very well pictured by the foreign travellers of the period. Basically, India is a religion based nation since the ancient times and had a very rich cultural past with the ancient civilization in the world. It is very much obvious that culture give rise to certain customs, manners and ceremonies which on the other hand give rise to superstitions and beliefs.

The foreign travel accounts of the 16th and 17th century presents many observations regarding myths, superstition, custom and beliefs of the people. Such superstitions and beliefs with slight variations seem to be commonly popular among the Hindu and Muslim sections of society. Though, illiteracy can be assigned as one of the reasons for these social dogmas among the common peoples but even the literate and the rulers are highlighted by the foreign travellers account following the superstitions and beliefs of the time. The Persians chronicles corroborates the picture given by the foreigners which strengthen the fact.

Hindus seemed to be more superstitious as compared to the Muslims. About Hindus, Manucci writes, "*...their religion is nothing but a confused mixture of absurdities and coarse imaginings, unworthy even of the rational man, much less has it the least trace of Divinity as its author*".[277] Superstitious beliefs are universally

[277] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 1.

held, but they seem more current among Hindus than among any other group.[278] Francois Martin (a late seventeenth century traveller) relates a story of withering crop because of lack of rains and the harvest was only saved by their firm belief in superstition.

The superstitions followed by the Hindus at the eclipse day were performed with the help of *Brahman*, with full enthusiasm. This was a great source of profit to the *Brahmans* on account of the offerings they extracted from poor and ignorant people, persuading them that the Sun and moon were fighting against each other, and that there would not be peace between these luminaries until vast offerings had been made to them.[279]

Different kinds of religious acts were performed, especially at the banks of the holy rivers. Tavernier writes. "It was a wonderful sight to watch the multitude of people, men, women, and children, who came from all quarters to bathe in the Ganges. But they must begin this bathing three days before they see the eclipse, during which time they remain day and night on the banks of the river preparing all kinds of rice, milk, and sweetmeats to throw to the fishes and crocodiles. Immediately when the *Brahmans* give the word, and they know it is the *fortunate hour*, whichever kind of eclipse it may be, of the Sun or moon, the idolaters break all the earthen vessels used in their households, and leave not one piece whole- this causes a terrible noise in a town."[280] Their belief was by bathing in the river they will clean themselves of their sins. Regarding the same eclipse in 1666 Bernier writes, "*The eclipse of 1666 is also indelibly imprinted on my memory by the ridiculous errors and strange superstitions of the Indians.*"[281]

The Mughal emperor also permitted these ancient and superstitious practices without disturbing the Hindus in the free exercise of their religion.[282] Fryer writes about the belief of Muslims in the eclipse as. "*the Moors are in a lamentable Plight,*

---

[278] *India in the 17th Century (Social, Economic and Political), Memoirs of Francois Martin (1670-1694)*, English tr. Lotika Varadarajan, Delhi, 1983, Vol. I, Part II, p. 683.
[279] Jarric Du, *op. cit.*, p. 136.
[280] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p.193.
[281] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 301.
[282] *Ibid*, p. 303.

making a great Noise with Pots and Pans, and other noisy Instruments not omitting their Prayers, fancying them prevalent to deliver them from their Travel."[283]

Another popular belief during the period that was prevalent among both Hindus as well in Muslims was in astrology. Astrologers played an important role in the court of the great Mughals. Sidi Reis mentions the importance of prophesy made by astrologers at Humayun's court.[284] The majority of Asiatics are so obsessed in favour of being guided by the signs of the heavens that no circumstances can happen below, which is not written above. In every enterprise they consult their astrologers. When two armies have completed every preparation for battle, no consideration can induce the generals to commence the engagement until the '*Sahet*' be performed. In like manner no commanding officer is nominated, no marriage take place, and no journey is undertaken, without consulting *Monsieur the Astrologer*. Their advice is considered absolutely necessary even on the most trifling occasion; as the proposed purchase of a slave or the first wearing of new clothes.[285]

Every quarter of the city had astrologers and astronomers. There is not a great man who has not in his house an astrologer. They prepared the horoscopes of sons of *Maliks*, nobles, *Amirs*, *Vazirs* and other high personnels. There were poor astrologers also who tell a person his fortune for a paisa and after examining the hand and face of the applicant, turning over the leaves of the large book, and pretending to make certain calculations, these imposters decide upon, the salient, or propitious moment of commencing the business, he may have in hand.[286]

Careri reflected the same idea while saying the king undertakes nothing without the advice of his astrologers.[287] Terry remarks, "*And in men of that profession the king puts so much confidence that he will not undertake a journey, not yet do anything of the least consequence, unlesse his wizards tell him tis a good and prosperous houre.*"[288] These astrologers depended on the stars for their calculation

---

[283] Fryer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 308.

[284] Reis, Sidi Ali, *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Sidi Ali Reis in India, Afghanistan, Central Asia and Persia, During the Years 1553-1556*, English tr. and ed., Arminius Vambery, Luzac & Co. Publishers to the India Office, London, 1899, p. 57.

[285] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 161. Also see Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 251, Monserrate, *op. cit.*, p. 9, *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

[286] Bernier, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-44.

[287] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

[288] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p.310.

and Jahangir had immense faith in them.[289] These were generally *Brahmans* by caste, but they had influence on Muslims as well as on Hindu masses. Even a street walker astrologer could influence a general man by telling his fortune with ambitious replies.[290] People even sought the help of astrologers and magicians for the recovery of stolen goods.[291]

At Malabar in South India these astrologers belonged to a lower caste of *Canaquas*.[292] Astrology was the means of their livelihood. Their importance can be felt when we learn that no King or Lord will undertake any business, nor go forth from his house without asking them the day and the hour on which he shall do it. As there was caste distinction in the Hindu society, they (astrologers) were not allowed to enter the Kings palace or the house of any person of good family. *"They know well the Signs (of the Zodiac) and the Planets, and have everything drawn out in plans".*[293]

People had very strong belief in omens. The sight of an auspicious object was always interpreted as a happy presage for the fulfillment of desires such as the sight of a cow with her calf, a pitcher full of water, curd and fish were believed to be auspicious whereas a bad omen was responsible for evil. On the birth of Emperor Akbar, Hamida Banu says; *"It was of very good omen that the birth was in a fixed sign, and astrologers said a child so born would be fortunate and long lived."*[294](Plate-I)

Sneezing was always considered to be a bad omen, a sign which predict evil. Similarly the sight of a corpse, an empty pot, or crossing of path by a cat was inauspicious omens. Manucci writes, *"These Hindus have many superstitions, of which should I begin to speak, I should occupy a very long time, and I should be wearisome. Among them it is the habit, when carrying water home, if they should encounter a corpse, to throw away the whole of that water, going back to refill the*

---

[289] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 77.
[290] *Ibid.*
[291] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 203.
[292] *Canaquas* is derived from a Sanskrit word *ganika* that means an astrologer which relates to profession rather than the caste.
[293] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 62.
[294] Begum Gulbadan, *Humayun Namah*, Tr., Annette S. Beveridge, Low Price Publications, Delhi, (First Published, 1902, Third rpt. 1996), p. 158.

vessel. Coming out of the house if any one sneezes, or if a cat crosses in front of them, they turn back and relinquish the business for that day".[295]

In South India all Nayars who were considered as mighty warriors, believed in ghosts of many kinds; they have among them lucky and unlucky days; on the unlucky days they undertake nothing, and do nothing; they believe also in omens, that if a cat crosses in front of any person who is about to do any business, he does it not; or, if on coming forth from the house for any purpose they see a crow carrying a stick, they turn back; or if in saying farewell to other persons with whom they have been, some one of them sneezes, he who was going, sits down again and does not leave so soon.[296]

Belief in magic, witchcraft and sorcery was very common during the period under study. Such superstitions and beliefs with slight variations seem to be commonly popular among the Hindu and Muslim sections of society. In Cochin, Goa and Bassein even some of the Christians having faith in Indian superstitions.[297]

[295] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 154-155.
[296] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 55.
[297] *Ibid*, pp. 200-201.

CHAPTER – III

CHAPTER-III

Cultural Life in the 16th and 17th Century by Foreign Travellers

India had a rich Hindu culture since ancient times. A new culture sprang up in India with the incorporation of Muslims during the medieval period which started shaping itself in a new milieu.

The Muslim culture was represented by the Mughal aristocracy; was a status symbol of the Mughal court and symbolised a culture that was magnificient and opulent. A display of cultural extravagance was a sign of higher social and political status for the nobles, who constantly desired proximity to the emperor. Mughal courtly culture was reflected in various forms; in the architecture of personal homes, in fashionable dressing, and in one's conduct, manner and speech. Pastimes and recreational activities like hunting and gambling also reflected cultural life of the period. The enthusiastic involvement in the celebration of fairs and festivals by the royalty and the common people helped in the cultural assimilation.

Over a period of time, this courtly culture filtered down even to popular literature, art and architecture. Like the imperial court, aristocratic households too became not only political centres but also artistic, intellectual, and cultural centres. Without the extravagant lifestyle of the nobles, Mughal life and art would have been devoid of much of its richness.

Encouragement and patronage was provided to cultural and literary activities by the ruling class. The scholars, musicians and astrologers were encouraged. The nobles patronized art and culture by indulging in artistic pursuits, encouraging artists, poets and craftsmen as a part of cultural enterprise. These courtly ideals of arts and manners were, therefore, easily diffused even among the middle classes, affecting their customs, ideas, aspirations, tastes and pleasures.

Both the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries were marked by a heightened cultural activity due to the political stability and economic prosperity of the kingdom and the aesthetic taste and literary bent of mind of the Mughals that contributed greatly to the development of culture in India. The activities enhancing the cultural

development were also felt by the foreign travellers who visited India during the period.

Pastimes and Recreation

Pastimes and recreation is a wider term which includes a lot of social activities that helps to pass time pleasantly or for relaxing for sometimes like games and sports, singing and dancing etc. Such social activities help a lot in building social character and are integral part of social life.

The sixteenth and the seventeenth century had also seen the prevalence of various types of social activities in India. These activities find graphic descriptions in the accounts of the contemporary foreign travellers.

From the accounts of the foreign travellers regarding pastime and recreation is clear that these social activities were enjoyed alike by the emperor as well as by the commoners. The significant feature of the social activities of the period was that they had been greatly influenced by the military and adventurous characteristics of the age.[1]

Therefore, some of the games like *chaughan* (polo), hunting (*shikar*), gladiatorial contests, combats were limited to the aristocratic class whereas, chess, chaupar, playing cards, pigeon-flying, kite-flying, wrestling, fencing etc. were accessible to the rich and the poor alike. These amusements were constituted by both the indoor and outdoor activities.

Cards

Playing cards appears to have been popular in India from the ancient times. It is evident from *Humayun Namah* of Gulbadan Begum that Emperor Humayun indulged in a game of cards at Kabul with his stepmother and sisters.[2] The successors

---

[1] Ojha, Pran Nath, *North Indian Social Life During Mughal Period*, Oriental Publishers and Distributors, Delhi, 1975, p. 46.

[2] Begum Gulbadan, *Humayun Namah*, Tr., Annette S. Beveridge, Low Price Publications, Delhi, (First Published, 1902, Third rpt. 1996), p. 77.

of Akbar with the exception of Aurangzeb were very keenly interested in this game. Jahangir was intensely fond of it.[3] Thomas Roe once saw Shahjahan playing cards earnestly.

The game was equally popular with the common people who displayed several trick at cards.[4] Some foreign travellers[5] like John Marshall, Mandelslo and Ovington refer to its popularity among the commoners as well.

Chess

The playing of chess was common during the period. It was a good indoor game and was the most aristocratic of all indoor games.[6] Alberuni also mentions the name of this game with the length of some detail. During the Mughal period the king, the nobles and the commoners all took great delight in playing this game.[7] Manucci refers to the keen interest of the aristocrats in this game, and he says that by playing chess they *"learn to govern, place and displace, give and take, with discretion to the glory and gain of their projects."*[8] Abul Fazl also writes that it was most popular indoor game at that time for both high and low classes.[9] Akbar is said to have played the game of living chess with slave girls as pieces moving on the chequered pavement of the *Pachisi* Court at Fatehpur Sikri.

Music

Music has ever been a source of entertainment and the art of music has been cultivated and patronised since ancient times. Various types of music were recorded

---

[3] Roe, Thomas, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India, 1615-19*, ed. Sir William Foster, New and Revised edition, Oxford University Press, London, 1926, p. 293.

[4] John Albert De Mandelslo, *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India (1638-1639)*, ed. M.S. Commissariat (Oxford University Press, London, 1931, AES, New Delhi, 1995), p. 66.

[5] Marshall, John, *John Marshall in India Notes and Observations in Bengal 1668-72*, ed. Shafaat Ahmad Khan (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), p. 273, Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

[6] Ojha, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

[7] Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

[8] Manucci, Niccolao, *Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India 1653-1708*, English tr. & ed. William Irvine (London: 1907, rpt. LPP, Delhi: 1990), Vol. II, p. 432.

[9] Fazl, Abul, *Ain-i-Akbari*, English Tr. Blochmann, revised by Phillot, Vol.I, (reprint– first published, 1927), Calcutta, 1965; H.S. Jarret, revised by J.N. Sarkar, Vol. II & III (2nd edition- first published; 1949), Delhi, 1965, Vol.I, p. 320; Badaoni, Abdul Qadir, *Muntakhab-ut-Twarikh*, English Tr. and ed. Vol. I- George S.A. Ranking, Vol. II- W.H. Lowe, (reprint- first published, 1899), Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, 1973, Vol. II, p. 324.

as the favourite pastimes both for rural and urban peoples, from king down to the commoners.[10]

The aristocratic class was very fond of music during the period under study. Babur himself excelled in music and composed songs. He supplemented his wine parties with music.[11] His son Humayun enjoyed a book and song with palatable food and flasks of wine.[12] Besides Ram Das and many other great musicians,[13] Tan Sen[14] was also the product of Akbar's reign. Manrique describes that among the different varieties of music; *dhrupat chind, chruva, bangula, qawl, chutkalari, taranah, lahchari, chhand, sadara, desakha* were the most prominent.[15] Similar accounts are also given in *Ain*.[16]

Among all the above accounts Ovington's description is more graphic and reliable regarding commoner's sources of entertainment. A delightful and sweet sounding rhythmical melody sung in chorus by the seamen busy with their oars would "keep up their spirit." Young women of the countryside with pitchers on their heads would go to a well in the village early in the morning to fetch water. All the way to the well and back, they would sing in chorus, sometimes in batches of 20 or 30. The common people's fondness for music and singing is also corroborated by the painting of the period. (Plate- II).

The rich and the nobles were good at music both instrumental and vocal. Jahangir[17] and Shahjahan's[18] reign were remarkable for the progress of vocal and instrumental music. All the Mughal kings, with the solitary exception of Aurangzeb were great patron of music.

---

[10] Mandelslo, *op. cit.* p. 310.
[11] Babur, Zahiruddin Muhammad, *BaburNama*, Tr. Annette Susannah Beveridge, Oriental, New Delhi, 1922, rpt. 1979, Vol. I, pp. 292-303.
[12] *Ibid.* p. 388.
[13] *Ibid.*
[14] *Ain*, Vol. I, p. 681.
[15] Manrique, Fray Sebastian, *Travels of Fray Sebastien Manrique, 1629-1643*, (ed.) Luard & Hosten (Hakluyt Society, London, 1926), Vol. II, p. 196.
[16] *Ain*, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 262.
[17] Jahangir, Nooruddin Muhammad, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, English tr. A. Rogers & H. Beveridge, London, 1909-1914, Vol. I, p. 331.
[18] Mandelslo, *op. cit.* p. 23.

Dancing

Dancing known as *nautch* during Mughal period was also a good pastime for the rich especially. All festive occasion were incomplete without dancing girls and this can be seen in a picture in *Humayun Nama*.[19] Dancing girl would play, sing and dance and entertain the guests.[20] Female dancers and public women were available in big cities at reasonable rates.[21] The patar[22] and rope dancing[23] were very popular. *Akhara* was a special type of dance enjoyed by nobles.[24] Aurangzeb was very strict and against dancing as Manucci writes, "*he ordered public women and dancing girls either to marry or to "clear out of his realm.*"[25]

Theatrical Performance

Theatrical performances were also a source of recreation for the people during the period. Manucci refers to the Mughal family's fancy for the theatre when he writes, "the theatre dance, and music had their prescribed hours. Some actors from Gujarat performed a piece before Shahjahan showing the maladministration in that kingdom.[26] He further records that educated men and women would sometimes relax themselves by reading light literature, short stories, novels, poetry etc. It was also customary to listen to stories of adventures, heroes and lovers before going to bed at night. Another common practice, especially among the rural folk, was to pass their idle hours in solving riddles put to them by their friends.[27] This fact also finds a mention in Badaoni's work.[28]

Hunting

Hunting of the wild animals and birds was the most absorbing and exciting sport during the sixteenth and the seventeenth century which is depicted in the travelogues. Travellers give very detailed description of the hunting expeditions

---

[19] Begum Gulbadan, *Humayun Namah, op. cit.*, p. 160. See photo facing p. 160.
[20] Mundy, Peter, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia 1608-1667*, ed. R.C. Temple, Hakluyt Society, London, 1914, Vol. II, p. 216. For a photo of dancers see Peter Mundy, II, p. 217.
[21] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 189.
[22] Badaoni, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 97.
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] *Ain, op. cit.* III, p. 258. (See details).
[25] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 9.
[26] *Ibid.* Vol. I, pp. 198-99.
[27] *Ibid.* Vol. II, p. 331.
[28] Badaoni, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 190.

undertaken by kings and courtiers. Different wild animals with diverse methods were hunted for this purpose. Emperor Akbar had invented a mode of hunting known as '*qamargah*' which could be used in hunting almost all wild beasts. (Plate- III). In this method a kind of hunting circle was formed round the *shikargah* that reduces to a small compass. This method involves the participation of nobles, huntsmen and sometimes commoners also with different sorts of arms like arrows, short spikes, swords and musketoons.[29]

Lion hunting was exclusively reserved for the king and the royal princes.[30] (Plate- IV). None could kill a tiger or a lion without a prior permission from the king.[31] Lion or tiger hunting was the most exciting when hunted with bow and arrow or by a matchlock sitting on an elephant with uncovered howdah which was the adopted method by the Mughal emperors. There was a great risk in this method which is evident from the incidents Jahangir had to encounter.

Elephant hunting was also a royal game which also could not be indulged in without the special permission of the permission of the king. It was performed differently. "*In some places they make Pit-falls for them (elephant), by means whereof they fall into some hole or pit, from whence they are easily got out, when they have once entangled them well.*"[32] Another common method used at that time was to use of a tame female to attract the male elephant.[33] The methods of hunting of various other animals like leopards,[34] *nilgaus*,[35] boars, deers, antelopes,[36] gazelles,[37] buffaloes are also preserved in the travelogues and other contemporary sources of the time. The beasts like tigers, dogs, deers, buffaloes, and elephants were especially trained for hunting. (Plate- V).

---

[29] Bernier, Francois, *Travels in the Mughal Empire A.D. 1656-1668*, Tr. and ed. Archibald Constable (London: 1891, 3rd ed., LPP, Delhi: 2008), p. 377.
[30] *Ibid.* p. 218
[31] Pelsaert, Francisco, *The Remonstrantie*. English tr. W.H. Moreland and P. Geyl. Jahangir's India, Cambridge, 1925, Low Price Publication, New Delhi, rpt. 2001, p. 52.
[32] Thevenot, Jean de, *Voyages De Mr. De Thevenot*, IIIrd Part ed. Surendranath Sen, Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri (Delhi; National Archives of India, 1949), p. 64.
[33] *Ibid.*
[34] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 112.
[35] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 218.
[36] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
[37] Careri, G.F. Gemelli, *A Voyage Round the World by John Francis Gemelli Careri, IIIrd Part*, ed. Surendranath Sen, Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri (Delhi; National Archives of India, 1949), p. 252.

For South India there is no such detailed description available in the travelogues. Only passing references are made by Varthema and Barbosa[38] regarding the Vijayanagar Empire. Varthema noticed that the capital occupied the most beautiful site with certain very beautiful places for hunting and some for fowling, so that it appeared to him to be a second paradise.[39] At Calicut, Varthema writes, 'they are great hunters.'[40]

Hawking

Hawking formed an interesting pastime of the period as is evident in the travelogues which finds satisfactorily corroboration in the Persian chronicles. Besides many elaborate Mughal paintings are also available in which kings or princes are shown carrying hawks or falcons on their wrist that strength the fact. From the evidences found this game seems to be ubiquitious as equally entertaining in Europe[41] and Persia[42] also. The South Indian king Krishnadeva Ray seems to have maintained a large establishment of falcons and hounds. The hounds helped the hunters in tracking the wild animals to their chase, the falcons pursued the bird.[43] Barbosa writes that the people of this kingdom (Vijayanagar) were great hunters both of flying game and wild beasts.[44] At Champaner in Gujarat also falcons were kept for hunting of fowls.[45]

Apart from hunting that excited the most to the Mughal emperors and princes, hawking also attracted the interest of the Mughals. The Mughal emperors regarded it a matter of dignity to be accompanied on a march by fowlers carrying many birds on their wrists.[46] Jahangir so much liked hawking and catching the water fowl with the

---

[38] Barbosa, Duarte, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, English tr. and ed. Mansel Longworth Dames, [1812, 1918-21], Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, rpt. 1989, Vol. I, p. 199.

[39] Varthema, Ludovico Di, *The Itinerary of Ludovico Di Varthema of Bologna from 1502 to 1508*, English tr. John Winter Jones, 1863, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi (rpt. 1997), p. 50.

[40] *Ibid.* p. 70.

[41] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 54. Also see, Jarric, Du, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, Tr. with introduction and notes by C.H. Payne, 1926, Routledge/Broadway, London, p. 55. Father told that the birds of chase, falcons and hawks were also found in Portugal when asked by the emperor Akbar.

[42] Ovington, John, *A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689 by J. Ovington*, ed., H.G. Rawlinson, Oxford University Press, London, 1929, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, rpt., 1994, p. 161.

[43] Ramayya, N. Venkata, *Studies in the History of the Third Dynasty of Vijayanagar*, Madras, 1935, p. 418.

[44] Barbosa, *op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 228

[45] *Ibid.* Vol. I, p. 124.

[46] Monserrate, Father Antonio, *Mongolicae legationis Commentarius*, Edited by John S. Hoyland (tr.) and S.N.Banerjee (annotator),Commentary of Father Monserrate, Asian Publishers, Jalandhar, 1993, p. 78.

falcon that he always carried boats on his march.[47] Jahangir had four thousands hawks of all kinds.[48]

Royal hawks were bought and bred in a separate department composed of many offices and servants who looked after the royal hawks. All the birds of prey were commonly known as hawks that were kept by the emperors. *"every species of the birds of prey used in field sports for catching patridges, cranes, hares, and even, it is said , for hunting antelopes, on which they pounce with violence, beating their heads and blinding them with their wings and claws."*[49] These birds were taught to prey animals[50] or to catch the water fowls swimming on the surface of the water. *Bakhshish* was given to the *Mir Shikar* when a particular falcon caught a bird.[51]

Other than catching water fowls with the help of hawks another method was to wear the head cover resembling the bird by the hunter with two holes for eyes for watching the birds. In this way, the hunter drowning his body under water, went towards the birds and pulled them one by one under the water.[52] Sometimes painted earthen pot was used by the hunter to cover his head.[53]

From the accounts of foreigners it seems that the hawking was the amusement of the kings and nobles. On the other hand water-fowling amused both rich and poor alike.

Shooting of birds was another pastime enjoyed by the rich peoples by guns whereas bows and arrows were commonly used.[54]

Archery

Archery and swordsmanship[55] were the order of the day. Every young man with ambition was expected to be good at the bow and sword. We also find that matches and contests were held and rewards were given. Emperor Humayun practised

---

[47] Roe, *op. cit.*, p. 325.
[48] Foster, William (ed.), *Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*, London, 1921, Low Price Publication, Delhi, 2007, p. 104.
[49] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 262.
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] *Ibid.*
[52] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 246. Also see *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p.312.
[53] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
[54] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 246. Also see *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p.312.
[55] *Ain*, *op. cit.*, Vol.I, pp. 262-63.

archery. Royal princes practised archery and they tried to excel each other. Bernier also records that martial sports like archery and swordsmanship had a special fascination for the people.[56] A Mughal was having a reputation of a strong archer.[57]

Archery was prevalent in those days for safety measures as a method of warfare.[58] Hawkins hired shot and bow-men for his safety during journey.[59] Archery as a martial art is also mentioned by Manrique.[60] Manucci corroborates the same.[61]

Pigeon-Flying

Pigeon flying was an important source of amusement during the period under study by all the classes of societies. But it was considered the sport of 'little people' in the time of Babur and not the pastime of the kings.[62] The involvement of aristocracy and nobility in pigeon-flying is ample in record. Emperor Akbar had termed the word 'Ishqbazi'[63] for pigeon-flying. Father Monserrate also mentions pigeon-flying as a sort of amusement.[64] The interest of Akbar in pigeon-flying are scattered in many persian accounts also. There were 10,000 khasah (royal) pigeons[65] reared by Jahangir. Apart from serving the purpose of amusement pigeons were also employed for sending intelligence of the departure of the king from his palace and his arrival into the Public Hall to hold audience.[66] Nobles, too, enjoyed it and brought excellent pigeons from foreign countries, like Turan and Iran to be trained for the game.[67]

Polo

Polo is the modern name for the game *'Chaugan'* that was the most aristocratic game of the time. In Arabic it was known as *Soulajan*. It was played on horseback, with a wooden ball which was hit by hammers also of wood.[68] Akbar's intense

---

[56] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
[57] Husain, Iqbal, "Mahmud Balkhi, Hindu Shrines and Practices as Described by a Central Asian Traveller in the First Half of the 17th Century" in Irfan Habib (ed.) *Medieval India I*, Aligarh Muslim University, 1992, p. 152.
[58] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
[59] *Ibid.* p. 8.
[60] Manrique, *op. cit.*, Vol.I, p. 413
[61] Manucci, *op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 432.
[62] *BaburNama*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 259.
[63] *Ain*, *op.* cit., Vol. I, p. 310.
[64] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
[65] *Ain*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 314-315.
[66] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 467.
[67] *Ain*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 310.
[68] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

fondness for this game bears testimony in the contemporary records.[69] "Superficial observes look upon this game as a mere amusement, and consider it mere play, but men of more exalted view see in it a means of learning promptitude. It tests the value of man, and strengthens bonds of friendship. Strongmen learn in playing this game the art of riding, and the animal learn to perform feats of agility and to obey the reins. Hence, his majesty is very fond of this game. Externally, the game adds to the splendour of the court, but viewed from higher point, it reveals concealed talents."[70] The people of Gujarat were well skilled in playing this game.[71] A rare reference to the game in the travelogues as well as in other historical records suggests its popularity was confined to aristocratic class only.

Animal Combats

The combats of different animals were very popular form of amusement for king, nobles and the commoners alike during the 16th and 17th century. The king and the nobles amused themselves with costly and dangerous combats between elephants,[72] tigers, deer, cheetahs, boars,[73] leopards, bulls and other wild beasts.[74] 'Beast fights'[75] were a source of entertainment in the Vijayanagara Empire says Domingo Paes.

Animal fights were an ever welcome entertainment for excitement-seeking and sensation-loving Mughal Emperors. Animal combats were held since ancient times in India as the Buddhist painter had expressed the vigour and action of fighting bulls in the Ajanta caves through his eloquent art.[76] Rhinoceros, elephant, ram and bull fights constituted one of the most important part of the birthday celebrations at the court of Chandragupta.[77] Several references to animal combats are found in the travelogues of the period under study which are depicted in the miniatures painting and in the Persian sources as well. (Plate- VI).

---

[69] *Ain*, *op. cit.*, p. 309, Badaoni, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 86.
[70] *Ain*, *op. cit.*, p. 309.
[71] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 119.
[72] *BaburNama*, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 631.
[73] Badaoni, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 406.
[74] Mandelslo, op. cit., p. 43.
[75] Sewell, Robert, *A Forgotten Empire*, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1924, First Indian Edition, 1962, p. 274.
[76] Griffiths, J., *Paintings in the Buddhist Caves of Ajanta*, London, 1898, Vol. II, Plate 114.
[77] Havell, E.B., *The History of Aryan Rule in India from the Earliest Times to the Death of Akbar*, London, GG Harrap [n.d.], 1918, p. 84.

The elephant fight was a royal prerogative serving undoubtedly, of the most spectacular sight.[78] Emperor Akbar was very fond of elephant fight which is obvious from his invention of a new method for governing the beast when it becomes unmanageable. The method was the sharp hooks fixed on long handles and bombs filled with powdered sulphur can be lighted and thrown into the arena where it blasts loudly terrifying the beast to stop. Elephant-fights were also stopped by the same means.[79] Akbar took delight in gladiatorial contest also.[80] Jahangir's interest in the elephant-fights is also confirmed by various foreign travellers.[81] Elephant-fights were held five times a week which was a cruel deed often killing or dangerously hurting the men.[82] Whereas Coryat calls it the bravest spectacle in the world as the fighting elephants looks like two small mountains jostle together and can only be parted by a certain fire-works.[83] During the reign of Shahjahan[84] the most graphic and pictorial description is given by Bernier when he writes that the *mahavats* often risked their lives in the hope of getting rich rewards from the king, and allowances and jobs for their widows and children.[85] Peter Mundy, Manrique, Mandelslo and Manucci also refer to it for the period of Shahjahan. In the reign of Aurangzeb the continuation of elephant-fight is confirmed by John Fryer.[86]

Animal combats of other animals like antelope,[87] boar,[88] buffalo,[89] camel,[90] cock,[91] ram,[92] stag[93] and even monkeys are also mentioned by the foreigners.

The common peoples content themselves with less expensive and harmless fights of he-goats, rams, cocks, quailes, stags and antelopes.[94] Cock-fighting was very

---

[78] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 127, Manrique, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 162, Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p. 43, Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 277, Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 208.
[79] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
[80] *Ibid.* p. 61, See also, Jarric, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.
[81] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, pp. 108, 177, 247 & 306.
[82] *Ibid.* p. 108.
[83] *Ibid.* p. 247.
[84] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 216-217.
[85] Bernier, *op. cit.*, pp. 277-78.
[86] Fryer John, *New Account of East India and Persia: Being Nine Years 1672-81*, ed. William Crooke (Hakluyt Society, London, 1909, AES, New Delhi, 1992), Vol. I, p. 311.
[87] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 126.
[88] Jarric, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
[89] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 171.
[90] Jarric, op. cit., p. 9.
[91] Fryer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 417.
[92] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 126.
[93] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
[94] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

common among the higher middle-class. Varthema witnessed a five hour continous fight at Tenaisserim, "so that at the end both remained dead".[95] Spacious grounds were reserved in important cities like Agra, Delhi, Fatehpur Sikri, etc., for the amusement of the urban population.[96] Even betting on animal fights were allowed and the stakes on royal deer combats were fixed for *mansabdars* from Rs. 2/- to 8 *muhurs* according to the status of the opponents, the deer-keeper and the classes of the deer engaged.[97]

Wrestling

Wrestling was also a favourite form of diversion in those days. The monarchs, encouraged it, employed renowned wrestlers, took keen interest in watching wrestling matches and sometimes gave personal exhibition of feats in wrestling. An interesting account of a quarrel between Akbar and his cousin, the son of Mirza Kamran, over the possession of a drum took place once. The matter was decided by a wrestling bout between the two.[98] A wrestling match was organised by the nobles of Humayun, in which the monarch also joined.[99] Whereas Shahjahan's interest can be confirmed by the account of Manucci who writes, "Shahjahan was eager to have at his court all sorts of wrestlers. These were men of great strength who frequently contended in his presence. He also ordered boxing matches".[100]

There was also a certain set of rules to be observed by the participants at a wrestling contest and those who broke them were not only debarred from future match but also sometimes, given exemplary punishment. Many wrestling matches took place under the royal patronage, and the Mughal Kings and princes from Babur downwards took delight in watching them and heartening the contestants by their presence. The winners were profusely rewarded.[101]

Boxing seems to be a form of violent wrestling to Domingo Paes.[102] Boxing contests were held at the court of Akbar.[103] He even kept a large numbers of Persian

---

[95] Varthema, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
[96] Peter Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 50.
[97] *Ain*, *op.* cit., Vol. I, pp. 228-30.
[98] *Akbarnama*, English Tr. H. Beveridge, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Rare Books, Delhi, 1972, Vol. I, pp. 455-56.
[99] *Ibid.*, p. 486.
[100] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 191.
[101] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 335
[102] Sewell, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

and Turani boxers at the court. According to De Laet, "they enjoy looking at boxing matches and at conjuring". Shahjahan ordered boxing matches to be held from time to time.[104]

Acrobatics

Acrobats,[105] jugglers,[106] conjurers,[107] jesters[108] were spread all over the country and formed the chief source of entertainment to the Indian folk. They engaged themselves in this profession for earning their livelihood and belonged to the lower strata. They moved from place to place entertaining kings and commoners alike. Some of them were also employed by the rulers or the nobles for their own amusements, or for that of their guests. Some of them performed various physical feats sometimes walking on a rope. The rope dancers, called *nats*, entertained the audience with their "wonderful acrobatic feats".[109] This statement is corroborated by Abul Fazl. (Plate- VII).

At the land of Malabar in South India, the presence of tumblers and jesters also contributed in the rejoicings.[110] It appears that the best players in Mughal times came from the Deccan who, as Peter Mundy asserts moved up and down the country exhibiting their antics in different styles.[111] Young girls also performed acrobatic feats for the entertainment[112] of their royal patrons. Mundy writes, *"the daunceing wenches doe it with of grace, turneinge, traceinge and winderinge their bodies, and with it head, armes and hands, acte many wanton womanish and some lascivious gestures....."*[113]

Jugglers carrying animals trained to play pranks and knowing how to perform conjuring tricks were common in Mughal India. *"The roads and open places were full, too, of jugglers, dancers, players, and such rabble, the noise was deafening, and*

---

[103] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
[104] Manucci, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 191.
[105] Norris, William, *the Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb (1699-1702)*, (ed.) Harihar Das, condensed and rearranged, S.C. Sarkar (Calcutta; 1959), pp. 166-67.
[106] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 313.
[107] Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 153.
[108] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
[109] Norris, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-67.
[110] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 21.
[111] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 254-55.
[112] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 109.
[113] *Ibid.*

the crowd made it even more impossible to see, or find room to move."[114] They travelled from place to place with their wives and children.[115] Fryer writes, "*These are Vagrants that travel to delude the Mobile by their Hocus Pocus Tricks*"[116]

Thevenot alone states that the most popular amusements of the boys were kite flying, climbing on trees and the use of gigs, trumpets, toys etc.[117] As a source of information regarding games, sports and other amusements, in the times of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb, Manucci and Bernier may be held as better informed than the other travellers.[118]

Festivals and Fasts

India has been a land of festivals and fasts from the very beginning of Indian history. This interest confirms the religious nature of Indian peoples. These fairs and festivals had made our country very colourful and attractive throughout the year. "*We have social and religious, seasonal and regional festivals, many of them jointly celebrated by all the communities.*"[119] Foreign travellers of 16th and17th centuries were also not untouched by the joy and happiness spread by the festivals and fasts during the period.

European travelogues as well as non-European travelogues like *Bahral-asrar fi ma 'rifat al-akhyar* and *Mir 'atu'l Memalik*, contains the references of Indian festivals and fasts. All important festivals and fasts were recorded by foreign travellers that passed through their eyes. These travellers have given a picturesque description of festivals and fasts as celebrated during the period under study.

Starting with Muslim festivals and fasts we come to know through evidences in the form of recorded references that the important Muslim festivals were *Id-ul-Azha, Id-ul-Fitr, Ramzan, Muharram, Shab-i-Barat and Nauroz.*

---

[114] Pelsaert, *op. cit.* p. 72. Also see Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
[115] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 55-56.
[116] Fryer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. p. 443.
[117] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
[118] Badaoni, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 189.
[119] Sangar, S.P., "Festivals in Mughal India", Panjab University Reasearch Bulletin. Vol. XIV, No.1, April 1983, p. 99.

Id-ul-Azha or Id-i-Qurban

It was the feast of sacrifice and was normally held on the 10th day of the last month of the Muslim year. Its celebration under Akbar has been referred to by Abul Fazl[120]. It was celebrated during the Mughal times with great pomp and show as depicted by the travellers. Edward Terry says that "*Buccaree signifies the Ram feast in which Mahometans solemnly kill a ram, and roast him in the memorie of that ram which redeemed Ishmael when Abraham was redie to make a sacrifice.*"[121] Pelsaert tells us that the other *Id* (*Id-ul-Azha*) comes after 70 days which commemorates God's mercy to Abraham, when he was about to sacrifice his only son Issac. But the sacrifice was submitted by an angel and instead of Issac, a goat was sacrifice. Therefore, that day was held as a great festival and those who were able will have to sacrifice goat in his house.[122] Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri corroborates the fact that once Jahangir sacrificed three goats with his own hand at this festival.[123]

The Mughal Emperors used to participate in this festival with great enthusiasm which is evident from Peter Mundy's account when Mundy writes that, "The King went to celebrate Buckree Eede [Bakar'id] as much to say as the feast of Goates."[124] He further says that the Moores observe the feast in the memory of Abraham who was ready to sacrifice his son. He recorded that the festival fell on June 19th 1632 i.e., the 10th of zu'l-Hijja, the month of Pilgrimage to Mecca.[125] Manucci gives a vivid and detail description of the festival and calls it *Hid Corban* (Id-i-qurban). He says on that day (festival) at nine O'clock, the King comes forth from his palace with great display and majesty and visits the great mosque, where the chief qazi awaits him and the sacrifice of camel was performed in the presence of the Emperor. The qazi was rewarded with seven sets of robes by the King.[126] Fryer also speaks of the festival when the governor went out in pomp to sacrifice a ram or a he-goat. This was done by everyone in his house who could purchase one.[127]

---

[120] *AkbarNama*, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 51.
[121] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p.318.
[122] Pelsaert, op. cit., p. 73.
[123] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 189.
[124] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 197.
[125] *Ibid.*
[126] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 325-26.
[127] Fryer, *op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 306.

The *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-Mualla* (Court Bulletin) mentions *Id-ul-Azha* which was celebrated on August 10th, 1695. It tells Aurangzeb went to the place of sacrifice and sacrificed two goats with his own 'auspicious hand'. He rewarded Saifullah, *Darogha-i-Sarf-Khas*as per royal orders, Prince Mohammad KamBaksh sacrificed one camel in the *Diwan-i-am.* After that Princes A'zam Shah, Kam Baksh, Mohammad Muiz-ud-din and others came and offered greetings of the 'Id to the Emperor.[128] In the provincial capitals, the governors performed the festival in place of the King, visited the Idgah and sacrificed a goat with the usual rites and ceremonies.

Id-ul-Fitr

Id-ul-Fitr was also a prominent Muslim festival during the period under study and its significance lies in the fact that it is the festival of breaking of the fast. This day of rejoicing comes after the long drawn fasts of Ramzan[129] and hence therefore is particularly welcome. It is observed on the first of Shawwal, the tenth Arabic month. Moh. Yasin writes that, it is also known as Id-ul-Sadaqa (of Alms) because the alms are given bountiful in the festival.[130] Fitra (alms) are given according to Muslim law among the poors and the *Faqirs*. Pelsaert says, "*at the end of this month of fasting comes the great Id. In the morning they go to the great mosques named Idgah, which are usually outside the city, where the Kazis, who are their lawyers offers prayers.*"[131] Terry remarks the same when writes, "*the Ram-Jan fully ended the most devout Mahometan assemble to some famous misquit, where a Moola recite some parts of the Quran publickly.*"[132] People of all classes gather in great mosque and return home in great joy, the great men in full state, the poor in clean white clothes.[133] On the morning of '*Id*' Muslim perform careful ablution.[134] Jahangir went to *Idgah* to offer his thanks and prayers.[135] Friends send each other food accompanied by good wishes, and everyone is very gay because the heavy burden of fasting or abstinence is past.[136] According to Fryer, during the Mughal age the sight of the new moon which preceded

---

[128] Sangar, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
[129] Roe, *op. cit.*, p. 239.
[130] Yasin, Mohammad, *A Social History of Islamic India, 1605-1748*, Upper India Pub. House, Lucknow, 1958, p.55.
[131] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
[132] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 318.
[133] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
[134] *BaburNama*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp.235-36.
[135] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, op. cit., p. 37.
[136] Pelsaert, op. cit., p. 73.

the *Id-ul-Fitr* was proclaimed by firing of guns and blowing of trumpets. Fryer further affirms that even Aurangzeb used to celebrate this festival with great enthusiasm.[137]

Norris also writes, "*In a Muslim State the local governor or official announces it by gunfire or beat of drum or other means of proclamation and people congratulate each other that the period of fasting is over. The following day is a day of rejoicing - the Id festival*".[138] Norris further tells, "*It is not a peculiarly Mughal or Persian custom; it is one observed by all Muslims.*"[139]

The Moors in Surat celebrated then Eastern feast with great solemnity. The Governor paraded round the town with great pomp and magnificence, on a richly caparisoned elephant, blazing with jewels and precious stones. The principal officers and merchants of this superb town accompanied him, sumptuously dressed and mounted on fine horses. There were loud fanfares of trumpets and acclamations, in addition to salutes fired at all the gates and bastions, as the Governor passed by. All this lasted till noon.[140]

Ramzan

The sacred month of Ramzan is the month of keeping the fasts in Muslims.[141] The Muslim society as a whole without distinction observed this holy month of keeping fasts during the Mughal period. We have lots of references from the foreign travellers during the period about the Ramzan fasts. Sidi Ali Reis mentions the month of Ramzan though he did not went into detail. Father Monserrate writes about Akbar that he did not observe the month's fast which is called Ramadan.[142] Father Pierre du Jarric also gives passing reference of fasting in Ramzan.[143] Mahmud bin Amir Wali Balkhi also refers to the month of Ramzan.[144] Thomas Roe was of the view that the strict Mahomedans observed their old law and during the month of Ramzan,

---

[137] Fryer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 304.
[138] Norris, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
[139] *Ibid.*
[140] Carre, Abbe, *The Travels of Abbe Carre in India and the Near East, 1672-74*, English tr. & ed. Lady Fawcett & Charles Fawcett (London; Hakluyt Society, 1947), Vol. 3, p. 783.
[141] *The English Factories in India, (1618-1669)*, ed., William Foster, Clarendon, Oxford, (1906-27), Vol. 9 (1651-54), p. 66.
[142] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
[143] Jarric, *op. cit.*, p. 146.
[144] Iqbal Husain, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

Mahomedan were unwilling to drink wine.[145] Ramzan, according to Edward Terry was the month for the Muslims when they observed fast and during that period they deemed it necessary to be very religious; to forbear their women, to abstain from 'Meat or Drink'. But after the sunset they could eat at pleasure.[146] The fast of Ramzan were kept very strictly for a whole Lunar month. The moslem neither eat nor drink throughout one whole day, or until the star appear or have become visible in the evening.[147] Manrique also confirms that the month of Ramzan have thirty day's fast.[148] Fryer refers to the fast of Ramzan when nothing was eaten or drunk for the entire day and also to the celebrations after the fast.[149]

In October 1614, Muqarrab Khan, the Governor of Surat, refused to go abroad the English ship at Swally on the ground that Ramzan was not yet over.[150] The Moors with a very rigid and avowed Abstinence observe every Year one month, a Fast, which they term the *Ramezan*; during which time they are so severely abstemious, that they stretch not their Hands to either Bread or Water; till the Sun be set, and the Stars appear; no, not the Youths of 12 or 13 Years of Age. This Fast is not kept always at the same Season of the Year, but begins its date annually more early by Eleven Days. To add to the Sanctity of this Celebrated and Solemn Fast, their Mullah, acted with a sacred Zeal, and lively concern for the Souls of the people, will at this time spend whole Nights in the Mosque, in chanting aloud alternately their Divine Hymn, till the approach of the day breaks up their Devotions.[151] Norris also confirms observing the fasts of Ramzan when he writes the ceremony of saluting the New Moon every month, instead of only after the fast of the month of Ramazan.[152]

Moharram

Father Monserrate calls it the Musalman 'nine-day' festival which is held to honour Imam Hasan and Imam Husain, grandsons of Muhammad. Their father was Ali. They are said to have been conquered by the Christians in a war which they had

---

[145] Roe, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.
[146] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 318.
[147] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
[148] Manrique, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 192
[149] Fryer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 304.
[150] *Letters Received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East (1602-1617)*, ed. Frederick Charles Danvers (Vol. I) & William Foster (Vol. II-VI), Sampson Low, London, (1896-1902), Vol. II (1613-1615), p. 239.
[151] Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
[152] Norris, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

undertaken in order to establish and spread their grandfather's religious system. There were thereupon cruelly tortured by the unbelievers. For this reason the Musalman fast for nine days, only eating pulse; and on certain of these days, some of them publicly recite the story of the sufferings of Hasan and Husain from a raised platform and their words stir the whole assembly to lamentation and fears. On the last day of the festival funeral pyres are erected and burnt one after the other. The people jump over there, and afterwards scatter the glowing ashes with their feel. Meanwhile they shriek Hasan Hussain' with wild and savage cries.[153] Sidi Ali Reis had started his journey to Ahmadabad in the beginning of Muharram of the year 962 (end of November 1552), accompanied by Mustafa Aga.[154]

Mahmud Balkhi went to Lahore on 23 September, 1625. His observations of the celebrations of Muharram at that place are of great interest since he says that the first ten days of Muharram were divided into two parts. The first five days were of festive celebration on the ground that the Imams had permitted marriages during these days. During these days 'young khattris' wore the dress of Khattri women and leaving their homes spent the whole day 'shamelessly' in pleasure. During the next five days mourning was observed with black dresses being worn. On the 10th Muharram, 'all the Shias and all Hindus close the doors of their houses and shops, and conceal themselves inside like bats'. In this particular Muharram observance, which the author saw, a clash occurred in the market, in which many were killed; 50 Shias and 25 Hindus. Property worth Rs 1, 20, 000 was lost. The reason for the clash occurring is not stated. It is however, significant that the Hindu participated in the observance of Muharram, though there is no known basis of rejoicing in the first five days of Muharram.[155] After a month later Id-ul-Azha, Muharram was observed in commemoration of slaughter of Hasan and Husain. A great noise was made all night for a period of ten days; the men keep apart from their wives, and fast by day. The women sing lamentation and make a display of mourning; in the chief street of the city the men make two coffins, adorn them as richly as they can, and carry them round in the evening with many lights and large crowds attending with great cries of mourning, and noise. The chief celebration is on the last night. No Hindus can venture

---

[153] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

[154] Reis, Sidi Ali, *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Sidi Ali Reis in India, Afghanistan, Central Asia and Persia, During the Years 1553-1556*, English tr. and ed., Arminius Vambery, London, 1899, p. 30.

[155] Iqbal Husain, *op. cit.*, p.144.

into the streets before midday for even if they should escape with their life at the least their arms and legs would be broken to pieces.[156] Tavernier inform us that Aurangzeb had banned the celebration of Muharram festival in his reign. But Persian noble made no scruple about conforming themselves outwardly to the cult and customs of the Sunnis.[157] Peter Mundy has given an inaccurate description of Muharram when he tells that Imam Hasan was a great warrior who was slained by Hindus therefore the Moores solemnizes his funeral not only by making representative tombs but also drawing their swords to take revenge from the Hindus. It was dangerous then for Hindus to stir abroad. This they do for nine or ten days.[158] Whereas, John Fryer writes, *"the Moores solemnize the Exequies of Hosseen Gosseen, a time of ten days Mourning for two Unfortunate Champions of theirs who perished by Thirst in the Deserts, fighting against the Christians".*[159]

The Mohurram fell a day or two later, and was celebrated by the Shia sect of the local Muslims. To Norris's amazement it passed off without any disturbance on the part of the Hindu and other inhabitants. It showed that in that part of India at least there was little or no communal tensions between the different religious bodies.[160]

Shab-i-Barat

Shab-i-Barat or *Lailat-ul-Barat*, "the night of record, is observed on the fourteenth night of the eight month, Shaiban, and is also so called because on the night it is supposed that the lives and the fortunes of the mortals for the coming year are fixed and registered in Heaven."[161] Thevenot tells that the Mahometans of Gujarat celebrated a very different festivals which he had never observed and this was the "Feast of Choubret", further he writes, and believe that on that day the good Angels examine the Souls of the departed, and write down all the good that they have done in their life-times, and that the bad Angels sum up all their evil actions the same day. So that everyone employs that day wherein they believe that god takes an account of the Action of Men, in praying to him, doing Alms-deeds, and sending one another presents. They end the festival with lights and Bon-fires kindled in the streets and

---

[156] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.
[157] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p.139.
[158] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 219.
[159] Fryer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 306.
[160] Norris, *op. cit.*, p.165
[161] Yasin, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

public places, and a great many Fire-works which the about on all hands, whilst the Rich mutually treat one another with collations and feasts which they make in the very streets or shops.[162] Shahjahan was very particular about this festival and observed it regularly with great pomp and show.

Although Shab-i-Barat is also an important Muslim festival but it was not noticed by most of foreign travellers. Many reasons can be assigned for this. Firstly, it might be possible that they came at that time of the year when Shab-i-Barat didn't fell. Secondary, it might not be celebrated as that much of splendorous as the other prominent festivals. Thirdly, it might not be celebrated by all i.e., rich as well as common peoples. Even at present day there is difference of opinion about this festival.

Nauroz

Nauroz was originally a Persian festival. In India it was introduced by Akbar. Basically it was arranged by Akbar in March 1582 to commemorate Gujarat's Victory. Monserrate writes, *"In March 1582, the King arranged for a festival to be held in commemoration of his recent victory. This was called Nauroz."*[163] But Monserrate was of the view that it was borrowed from Hindus in accordance with ancient tradition, to regard these days as a holiday.[164]

The Ain says, "It commences on the days when the Sun moves to the Aries (March 21), and lasts till the ninth day of the month of the Persian year. Two days of this period are considered great festivals; when much money and numerous things are given away in presents."[165] Du Jarric also writes the same. Du Jarric says, *"The New Year's Day, takes place when the sun enters the sign of Belier [Aries]."*[166]

The Nauroz feast was held by Jahangir in honour of the New Year and it lasts for eighteen days.[167] Nauroz is a custom of solemnizing the New Year and is imitated from the Persian feast that signifies Nine days.[168]

---

[162] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
[163] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, p. 174.
[164] *Ibid.* p. 175
[165] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 276
[166] Jarric, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
[167] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 117.
[168] Roe, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

Edward Terry observed this feast at Mandu by chance. Terry writes, *"the sunne enters into Aries: from which time the King keeps a feast that is called the Norris signifying nine days, which time it continues; where all his nobles assemble in their greatest pomp presenting him with gifts, he repaying them again with princely rewards; at which time being in his presence."*[169] De Laet also tells the same. The English merchants in India used to sell their goods on the Nauroz days.[170]

Peter Mundy remarks that the Mughal King used to celebrate the Nauroz at the capital. Shahjahan sat on the peacock throne which cost over a crore of rupees that was equal to a million sterlings in 1632. The King sat for nine days and nights under rich and state by pavilion is of clothe of gold, with his *umaras* about him all marking the greatest shows of magnificence and mirth they can, in feasting, presenting, recreating with several shewer and pastime, and dancing wenches, fighting of Elephants etc.'[171] Bagar Khan, governor designate of Gujarat, celebrated the *Nauroz* on March 9, 1632, which on his way to Ahmadabad. The masons first made a *chabutra* (raised platform) for the purpose. He fired shots from his *Shutarnal* (a small gun placed on a camel's back) and ordered the boat of drums which were placed on the elephant's backs and one weighted 16 *maunds* Jahangir or 1,000 lbs. Trumpets were sounded. Peter Mundy had heard that he had brought from Orissa drums of silver and trumpets of gold, "which now the King possessed of, as also jewels and 9 great Elephants.[172]

Manucci gives a detailed picturesque description of the festival during Shahjahan's period. Manucci tells,t he person of royal blood were weighted in different ways and all the weighted things were distributed among the poors and were recorded to memorise the occasion. Large gifts were given to the King. The King scattered his favour to his subjects. But the festival cannot be celebrated with the same magnificence when the King is in the camp.[173] Thevenot also supports this. Manrique writes, "The Great Mogol appears in public; in his greatest magnificence and majesty thrioughout nine days, in a large, handsome and most richly decorated

---

[169] *Early Travel in India, op. cit.*, p. 310.
[170] *Letters Received, op. cit.*, Vol. III (1615), pp. 145, 309, Vol. VI (1617) July to December, p. 190.
[171] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 237-238.
[172] *Ibid.* Vol. II, pp. 238.
[173] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 325-26.

hall.[174] This clarifies that the royal court celebrated Nauroz in most extraordinary way.

The festival of Nauroz starts with a fair in Serraglio where ladies and daughters of great lords were permitted to enter. They opened their shops there and brought very rich goods for sale. The King came there and for the sake of pleasure argued for the price. These ladies were entertained with feasting and dancing.[175] Bernier corroborates the same. Shahjahan was fond of the sex and introduced fairs at every festival.[176] Coryat and Manrique observed the Nauroz at Lahore. Everyone dresses best and congratulate and wish happy feast to each other. The common people, as well as the most devout at this time usually ornament the doors and entrances to their houses with green branches, or else whiten them with plaster, daubing Sindul, a reddish-coloured substance, over them as this is an ordinary sign of a festive occasion in this part.[177]

According to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Nauroz being a Shia festival was abolished by the devout Sunni Aurangzeb. He transferred it to the coronation festival in the month of Ramzan. He allowed it in the cause of his sons, on their recovery from illness. He however imposed the condition that the money thus collected was to be distributed in charity.[178]

Thomas Coryat also refers to the organising of fair every year by King Jahangir. Coryat writes, "One day in the yeare, for the solace of Kings women, all the tradesmens wives enter the Mohal with somewhat to sell, in manners of a faire; where the King is broken for his women and with his gaines that night makes his supper, no man present. By this means hee attaines to the sight of all the prettie wenches of the towne. At such a kind of faire he got his beloved Normahal.[179]

Emperor's Birthday

The Birthday Anniversary of the King was also celebrated as one of the festivals of great rejoicing at the court. Jahangir kept both lunar and solar birthdays,

---

[174] Manrique, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 193.
[175] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.
[176] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 273.
[177] Manrique, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp.192-193.
[178] Sarkar, J.N., *History of Aurangzeb*, M.C. Sarkar and Sons,Calcutt, 1912, 1973, Vol. II, p. 299.
[179] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 279.

foure monthes after which is called the feast of his birth-day."[180] Thomas Coryat chanced to see Jahangir on his fifty-third birthday anniversary at the Mogul court in Agra. Coryat writes that the day was celebrated with great pomp and Jahangir weight himself in a pair of golden scales and then the weighed amount was distributed among the poore.[181] Edward Terry writes about Jahangir, "He is on his Birthday, the first of September yearly weighed, and account kept thereof by his physicians thereby guessing at his bodily estate.[182] Manrique explains the magnificence and splendour at Imperial court on Shahjahan's court. Manrique writes, "That year the Majesty was celebrating it in his own palace with many festal ingenuities, dances, spectacles and masquerades, which lasted most of the day. There over, the Emperor left his Imperial throne, and accompanied by a great concourse of princes and lords, proceeded to his mother's palace to see her and receive her felicitations."[183] And then, the Emperor was weighed against different items. All the articles weighed are distributed amongst the poor Bramanes and Baneanes, secretly.[184] Ovington tells,"there is another day in India, as well as in England, which is remarkable, the 5th of November. This day the great Mogul is weighed, and if it's found that he has increased in bulk, above what he weighed the proceeding year, this add excess of Mirth and Joy to the Solemnity; but if he prove lighter in the scales, then diminishes their Triumph, and damp their cheerful Entertainments. The Grandees and officers of state prepare for this Feast, two months before its approach what costly jewels and curious rarities they can anywhere meet with, which they present to the Emperor at this ceremony either to secure his favour or to ingratiate with him for a more exalted station, or Honourable Employ. The *Moguls* are sometimes weighed against silver, which has been distributed to the poor.[185] Thevenot tell that King's Birthday was celebrated as a great Festival at Delhi and lasts for five days.[186] Thevenot further writes that during five days, there is great rejoicing all over the Town, as well as in the Kings Palace, which is express by Presents, Feastings, Bonefires and Dances; and the King has a special care to give Orders that the best Dancing women and Baladines, be always at court."[187]

---

[180] *Ibid.* p. 118.
[181] *Ibid.* p. 245.
[182] *Ibid.* p. 328.
[183] Manrique, *op. cit.*, p. 201.
[184] *Ibid*, p. 202.
[185] Ovington, *op. cit.*, p.10.
[186] Thevenot,*op. cit.*, p. 66.
[187] *Ibid*, p. 67.

The Emperor Birthday was celebrated in the town among the people as Thevenot writes. Careri also says that the days were celebrated with great splendour and the nobles came to wish the King many happy years with presents of many jewels. They presented Shahjahan gold vessels set with jewels to hold scented water. He sat on the throne set with jewels and pearls. Careri misunderstood that the *Varshaganth* (birthday) and *tol* (weighing) were two separate festivals.[188]

Norris has also referred the Birthday celebration of the Great Mogul when he writes that the Mughal was accustomed to celebrate his birthday by distributing money, he accordingly ordered his treasurer to "distribute to all ye Dubasses, peons, parriers, cooleys a Rupee a piece & to inform ye occasion."[189]

Tavernier was a spectator of Shahjahan's Birthday. Tavernier says that the Emperor's Birthday which was celebrated as a grand festival lasted for five days. The Emperor was weighed on his Birthday. It was the weighing ceremony and if Emperor weighed more than in the preceeding year, the rejoicing is greater. After weighing Emperor Seats himself on the richest of the thrones and then all the nobility of the Kingdom come to salute him and offer presents. The court ladies also send gifts to the Emperor. All the gifts sums up in a huge amount and his time it is more than 2,250,000.[190]

Bernier had also described the Emperor's Birthday in detail. Bernier writes that the joy of the courtiers increased when it was found that Aurangzeb weighed two pound more than the previous year. The weighing ceremony was held on the third day of the festival. *Omrahs* were also weighted. The festival was held every year.[191]

New Moon was also hailed with general festivities, 'when, all malice apart, the Moors (i.e. Muslims) embrace one another, and at the night there of make a jubilee, by firing of guns, blowing of trumpets, feasting and praying very devoutly'[192] the eclipse of sun or moon was deemed an hour of crisis for the great luminaries. Loud cries announced the commencement of an eclipse. The Muslims generally occupied

---

[188] Careri, *op. cit.*, pp. 245-46.
[189] Norris, *op. cit.*, p. 174.
[190] Travernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 301-302.
[191] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 270.
[192] Fryer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 304

themselves in prayer and fasting till the shadow had passed over.[193] This was perhaps an innovation in imitation of the bathing festival of Hindus on such occasions.

The anniversaries (*'Urs*) of some of the reputed saints accounted for great festive gatherings about whom more hereafter: Coronation ceremonies of Kings were other festive occasions. The reference of other Muslim festivals such as *Akhiri Chahar Shambe, Bara Wafat, Chehellum, Id-i-Milad and Ab-i-Pashan* (Plate- VIII) are also found in contemporary sources but our travellers did not find them significant enough to record them in their narratives. (See Appendix- II)

Festivals and fasts are very common features of Hindu religion and make the Hindu religion hale and hearty throughout the year as it is even today. Almost all Hindu festivals and fasts were observed during the Mughal period as it is observed nowadays. And this is so because all the Hindu festivals and fasts are associated with mythological, historical and astronomical considerations; while others, like Vasant Panchami, Holi, Ganesh etc., were observed to mark the change of seasons. Ramnaumi and Janmashtami were observed to commemorate the Birth anniversaries of Lord Rama and Shri Krishna respectively. Like Muslim festivals during the period under study Hindu fests were also celebrated with great enthusiasm among the rich and poor. Mughal Emperors also took interest in these festivals. One marked feature of the Mughal Emperor in this sphere was the adoption of some Hindu festivals like Holi, Diwali, Dasehra etc., which were celebrated with equal enthusiasm, both outside and inside the court.[194] The Christian were also allowed to enjoy the celebration of Christmas, Michael Mass and Easter festivals.[195] Sometimes payments were also made for these celebrations.[196]

Many of the Hindu festivals had attracted the concentration of the foreign travellers during the medieval period. But some of the Hindu festivals do not find a mention in the travelogues like Dasehra, Shivratri, Rakshabandhan, Ramnaumi, Vasant Panchami, Janmashtami, etc. Although these festival were celebrated as are mentioned in contemporary Persian and vernacular sources, and that too in detail. The

---

[193] *Ibid.* p. 308.

[194] Sharma, Sri Ram, *Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, Munshiram, Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1940, 1962 & 1988, p. 28-29, 81-82, 119.

[195] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, p. 58, Jarric, *op. cit.*, pp. 80, 127.

[196] *Ibid.* Guerreiro, Father Fernao, Jahangir and the Jesuits, Tr., C.H. Payne, George Routledge and Sons, Ltd, London, 1930, pp. 32-33, 46, 47, 75.

reasons one can assign to this lacuna may be the ruling class were Muslims and for the reason foreigner might had tried to concentrate more on the Muslim ruling society. Another reason might be those Hindu festivals which were left by the travellers may not fell during the period of stay of the travellers and can be assumed to be insignificant in the opinion of the travellers.

The Hindu festival mentioned by the travellers are Holi, Diwali, The Swinging festival, The Solar and Lunar Eclipses, The Jagannath festival, The Bathing festival at Ganga, Festival of Siva, and some local Hindu festivals are also observed by travellers. All the Hindu festivals that are mentioned by the travellers during the period of study will be taken one by one to avoid the complications in the study.

Holi

Holi seems to be the most popular festival enjoyed and celebrated by the masses as well as by the higher classes and lower classes of Hindu society when Abdul Fazl writes that the Holi, one of the ancient festivals of Hindus, was the most popular day of rejoicing, music and feast, as it is today.[197]

According to Hindu mythology the festival of holi is celebrated to enjoy the victory of Prahlad over his demon aunt Holika. Therefore the previous night to the day of hoi celebration Hoikadahan is made by burning a huge bonefire and sharing happiness among the peoples by singing, dancing etc. On the next day of Holikadahan the festival is celebrated with great rejoicing followed by singing, dancing, feasting and throwing coloured water on one another. Monserrate tells us, that, the Hindus were free to throw dust upon anyone for a period of fifteen days and he levels the festival as degraded and a savage one. Whereas Thevenot writes, "They (Hindu) reckon their months by moons and with great devotion celebrate their Feast, called Houly, which lasts 2 days. At that time their temples are fed by people, who come to pray and make their oblations there; the rest of the celebration consists in dancing by companies in the streets, to the sound of trumpets. At this feast they are clothed in a dark red, and may go to visit their friends in Masquarade. "Those of the same tribe eat together, and at night they make bonfires in the streets. Their feast is celebrated yearly at the full moon in February, and ends by the destruction of the figure of a giant,

[197] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 321.

against which a little child shoots arrows, to represent what the people are made to believe."[198] Peter Mundy compares it with the French festival. "There is Holi of the Hindus used in the same manner as Shrovedite is in France, by eating, drinking and feasting, playing and throwing sweet oil and water with red powder on that again, so all bedaubing themselves; the courser sort towards the end of it about old shoes, rags, dirt and dust etc." John Drake, a servant of the East India Company was warned of the danger of sending off the indigo at that time 'in respect of the Gentiles feast, which they call Hooly, a mad time for two or three day's continuance'.[199] The direct participation of Mughal Emperor in the festival of Holi is not clear from the account of foreign travellers but found in other contemporary sources. (Plate- IX).

Diwali

Diwali was one of the important festivals of Hindus during the Mughal period as it is now. It is also known as 'Dipawali' or 'row of lamps' and was celebrated in the month of Kartik. Diwali is celebrated to remember the victory of Hindu god Rama over the Demon King Ravana who had forcedly captured Sita (Wife of Rama) for fourteen years. When Rama took back Sita from the captivity of Ravana and destroyed his and came back to Ayodhya the people there were very happy to see them and therefore they welcomed them by lightening lamps. The houses of the Hindus were well cleaned and washed and the Laxmi Poojan was performed at home. The houses were illuminated with the lamps and the people visited each other and observe feasts.

R.C. Temple calls it as 'feast of lights' as it actually is. He says further, "Apart from the so-called classical legends attached to this festival, the object of cleaning and lighting up the houses, and placing light outside them, is to make things pleasant for the spirit of the dead, who, on the Diwali night, are supposed to visit their old homes."[200]

Peter Mundy remarked that the festival lasted seven or eight days during which time 'they seldom doe anythinge in Marchandiseinge." On that night the

---

[198] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 81, Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 219-220.
[199] *English Factories in India*, *op. cit.*, Vol 7 (1642-45), pp. vii, 14.
[200] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol II, p. 220

Hindus set lamps and lights in their windows and terraces.[201] Fryer says, "The first New Moon in October, is the Baniyans Dually, a great day of celebration to the Papan Dieties, when they are very kind-hearted, presenting their Masters with Gifts, as Knowing they shall be no losers, and entertain one another with mutual Mirth and Banquetting."[202] Both Peter Mundy and Fryer had talked the joyous aspect of the festival of Diwali. But Mahmud Balkhi and Careri had related it with sorcery. "The local Hindus believed that, on the night of Diwali, they (Liver-Eaters in Orissa) walked 300 Kos in procession and ate all those they found in the way.[203] Careri writes, "The chief Divalis, or Festivals are two, when the moon decreases in October. All those Heathen Sorcerers work wonders by the help of the Devil, but particularly then Juggler's and Tumblers, who, without all doubt deceive the eye."[204]

Gambling was considered auspicious on this occasion.[205] On the night of that day they light lamps, and friends and those who are dear assemble in each other houses and pass their time busily in gambling. As the eyes of this caste (Vaishya) are on profit and interest, they considered carrying over and opening new accounts on that day auspicous.[206] Akbar was interested in the festive aspect of the celebration, while Jahangir preferred gambling and sometimes ordered his attendent to play the games in his presence for two or three nights.[207] Careri also associated the Diwali festival with the Bania caste. "And once a year, which is then (Bania) Grand Festival Season, called the dually time, they have a custom, much like that of our New-Year-gifts, of presenting the President and council, the Minister, Surgeon, and all the Factors and writes with something valuable."[208]

Diwali was celebrated by all members of the Hindu Society as it is great source of welcoming fortune and luck. Diwali was celebrated at the Mughal Court by Akbar and Jahangir. But participation of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb obscure. Although the Hindu Society enjoyed the festival during the period of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb

---

[201] *Ibid.*, p.146
[202] Fryer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 309
[203] Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subramanyan (eds.), *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400-1800*, New Delhi, 2008, p. 153.
[204] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
[205] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 321.
[206] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, op. cit.*, p. 245.
[207] Careri, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-234.
[208] *Ibid.*

with the same grandeur as it was during the reign of Akbar and Jahangir as gleaned from the travelogues.

Hook-Swinging

The foreign travellers of Mughal period gives the reference of a very peculiar festival known as Hook-Swinging. It was a kind of religious festival observed during the Mughal period in the region of Bengal. The description of the travellers presents this festival as a 'festival of penances'. Tavernier, Bowrey and Pietro Della Valle had mentioned this festival. Della Valle had witnessed Hook-Swinging at Ikkheri (South India) in November 1623. There he saw a beam raised 'at a good height' where on certain holy days some devout people hung themselves by the flesh by the hooks fastened to the top of it. They remained hanging in this manner for sometimes, blood running down in the meantime. They flourished their swords and bucklers in the air and sang songs in honour of their gods. He also saw near the temple big cars or chariots in which on certain festivals they carried their gods in procession'.[209] In the hook-swinging festival the poor people hooked themselves on the iron hooks attached on the branches of trees for one hour or two hours, till the weight of the body drags the flesh; but strangely there is no blood to be seen either on the cut flesh or on the hook.[210] Bowrey had described the hook-swinging festival in a little bit different way as he instead of hooks attached to trees had mentioned the poles on which the hooks was attached.[211] But both had drawn the same inference as from the writings it is clear that the sufferer were the peoples and the promoters to this cruel act were the wicked Brahmans. The relatives of the pennants brought presents like betel, money, or pieces of calico which is distributed by the pennants among the poor.[212] While the people came for voluntarily swinging a great rejoicing was made by the spectators.[213] Both the Travellers had observed this festival in Bengal. No other traveller mention this festival as if it was not observed everywhere except for Bengal.

---

[209] Della Valle, Pietro, *Pietro's Pilgrimage*, Wilfrid Blunt (ed.), James Barrie, London, 1953, p. 275.
[210] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 198-199.
[211] Bowrey,Thomas, *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal, 1669-1679*, ed. R.C. Temple (London; 1905), p. 199.
[212] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 199.
[213] Bowrey, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

Jagannath Festival

The Jagannath Festival or the *'Rathyatra'* was observed by the people of Orissa in which the idol of God Jagannath was kept in a beautiful and richly decorated chariot, and it was taken with the procession accompanied with music and other acts of rejoicing. Jagannath is the name of Krishna who is the 'Lord of Universe' in Hindu religion.

The Jagannath Festival was held once in a year during the month of June-July and the Hindu pilgrim came to the place to wash their sins. If anyone was likely to lose his caste for doing the sin against his caste, "soe forced to a long pilgrimage to Jagrenaut [Jagannath] their great pagod in Bengall."[214] At Midnapore, Mahmud Balkhi met peoples going for the ensuring Jagannath Festival at Puri.[215] Jagannath is at a distance of one month's journey from Midnapore.[216] Mahmud Balkhi's description of the Car Festival is of great interest. He gives the details of the chariot. Mahmud Balkhi, Tavernier, Bernier, Manrique, Thevenot, Norris and Bowrey had written about the Jagannath festival at length.

The festival was held for eight or nine day's space. A superb wooden machine is constructed which is set on fourteen or sixteen wheels like those of a gun-carriage, and drawn or pushed along by the united exertions of fifty or sixty persons. The idol, Jagannat, placed conspicuously in the middle, richly attired, and gorgeously adorned, is thus conveyed from one temple to another.[217] About 15,000 or 20,000 pilgrims visited the Jagannath daily as the pagoda being the object of the highest devotion by the Indians, who visit it from everywhere.[218] Fray Sebastian Manrique also says that Jagannath is a noted place of pilgrimage which large numbers of people visited and presented offerings. To wash away their sins the heathens made ritual suicide under the chariot. Manrique writes, "*Some of the jogues and ministers of hell, seized with a demonical frenzy and excited by the acclamations of the Barbarian heathen, voluntarily offer up their wretched lives to this demon, throwing themselves down in the centre of the road along which the procession passes with lots chariots fall of*

---

[214] Norris, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
[215] Iqbal Husain, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
[216] *Ibid.*
[217] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 304.
[218] Travernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 176.

idols. These pass over their unhappy bodies, leaving them crushed and mutilated. Such men are looked on as martyrs."[219]

Singing and dancing were the common features of the Hindu festivals mentioned by the travellers. Balkhi writes, "*A troupe consisting of about one hundered Kalawants, and natnis (dancers) are engaged in singing, and drummers and kettle-drum beaters create a thunderous round from all sides.* "[220] Bowrey also writes about the rejoicing at the festival. "*Many hundreds of women rare here maintained to dance on their offerings, with all varieties of musick that Asia affordeth, to play before their Gods, V.2 f. Pipes, drums, trumpets, with varieties of stringed instruments, with multitudes of voices very delegate to heare.*"[221]

The Hindus believed that they must visit the Jagannath once in life so that the sins of their forefathers would be forgiven and if they are careless and indolent in this regard, they would invite the wrath of the Ten Avatars.[222]

The Jagannath festival was very much similar to the Dashahara of Doab, Bengal and Rajasthan. The festival-cum-pilgrimage was participated by the Hindu Society (Pilgrim's) from all over the country during the Mughal period.

Education and Learning

The period of sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were significant from the point of view of progress of education in India. However, for the first half of the sixteenth century there is dearth of evidences on the education system coming from the accounts of foreign travellers who visited mostly the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagara in south India. But enough information is preserved in the travelogues on the education and learning for the Mughal Empire in the north India which has ample corroboration from other contemporary and non-contemporary sources.

Mughal emperors had given patronage to education and learning as a result the scholars and intellectuals flocked to their court, which were encouraged a lot by their

---

[219] Manrique, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 71.
[220] Iqbal Husain, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
[221] Bowrey, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
[222] Iqbal Husian, *op. cit.*, p.149.

patrons. The foreign travellers also felt this development of education which can be inferred from their accounts.

Although the reign of Babur didn't saw the visit of any foreign traveller in north India but his great literary genius may be inferred from his concern regarding minutest details such as construction of sentences, spellings and clarity in his letter to Humayun.[223] He entrusted the department of *Shuhrat-i-Ain* (Public Works Department) with the responsibility of building schools and colleges along with the publication of a gazette.[224]

Humayun, too, was highly cultured, learned and a true patron of scholars.[225] Humayun also built a Madarsah at Delhi. Shaikh Hussain was appointed as its teacher.[226] Besides, the scholars were patronized by him who prospered at his court and contributed greatly towards the education and literary activites in the country. Sidi Reis, the Turkish Admiral who was also a scholar had happened to come to India only by an accident was insisted to remain at court by Humayun till the winter rains end. Humayun was so curious to learn the Ottoman admiral's skills that he asked Reis. "Show me how one uses astronomical tables and the perpetual calendar for solar and lunar eclipses, as well as the astrolabe, teach me the treatise all this in three months. you will be given leave to depart."[227] Humayun appreciated poetry very much therefore, Reis, had to compose ghazels occasionally to gain his favour.[228]

Akbar inaugurated a new era in the field of education in India as prior to his accession the education was primarily religion and moral training.[229] But he transformed the ideas and objectives of education from being strictly religious to purely secular which led to the changing the form of education.[230] Akbar instructed numerous *maktabs*, *madarshahs* for both resident and day scholars. The most

---

[223] *BaburNama*, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 626.
[224] Law, N.N., *Promotion of Learning in India during the Muhammadan Rule*, London, Longmans, 1916, pp. 126-29.
[225] Badaoni, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 602.
[226] *Ain*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 538.
[227] Alam Muzaffar, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
[228] Reis, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.
[229] Husain, Yusuf, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, Asia Pub. House, Bombay, 2nd ed., 1962, p. 69.
[230] Srivastava, Ashirbadi Lal, *Medieval Indian Culture*, Shiva Lal Agarwala and Co. (P.) Ltd., 2nd ed., 1964, pp. 84-85.

admirable and noteworthy of all was a big college built by Akbar at Fatehpur Sikri. He also brought reforms in the 'Curriculum' and the 'Method of Teaching'.[231]

Jahangir's interest in promoting the course of education was so deep that soon after his accession to the throne, he repaired and constructed even those madrasahs and maktabs that had for thirty years, been the dwelling places of birds and beasts, and populated them with professors and students.[232] He made arrangements for the construction of mosques, madrsahs and khanqas.[233] Jahangir issued a regulation throughout the empire that the property of a heirless deseased was to be appropriated by the government and utilised for building and repairing madrsahs, monastries etc.[234]

Shahjahan's great interest in education and learning is reflected as Lahore, Ahmedabad, Burhanpur, Jaunpur, Sirhind, Thaneswar and Ambala became famous seats of learning and attracted students from distant places.[235] Shahjahan was a true patron of learned men and scholars and encouraged learning.[236] He greatly patronized scholars of arts and sciences and even encouraged the scholars from abroad granting them stipends and pensions.[237]

Aurangzeb also exhibited interest in the field of public instruction and general promotion of learning among his subjects.[238] He took keen interest that his subjects be educated and consequently for their benefit founded numberless maktabs and madrasahs in his kingdom and also maintained all the endowments made by previous Emperors and private benefactors in favour of educational institutions.[239] His interest in the education of the Bohras of Gujarat where he sent trained teachers and arranged monthly examination is really praiseworthy. In 1678, he granted a large sum of money for the reconstruction of the old maktabs and madrasahs in Gujarat. He helped

---

[231] Jaffar, S.M., *Education in Muslim India, (1000-1800)*, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, 1973, p. 86-87.
[232] Law, *op. cit.*, pp. 175, 181.
[233] Sahay, Binod Kumar, *Education and Learning Under the Great Mughals 1526-1707 A.D.*, New Literature Pub., Bombay, 1968, pp. 86-87.
[234] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
[235] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 424.
[236] Khan, Shahnawaz, *Ma'athir-ul-Umara*, Trans. H. Beveridge & Baini Prashad, Patna, First rpt. 1979, Vol. 2, Part-I, p.129.
[237] Hamilton, Alexander, *A New Account of the East Indies, Being the Observations and Remarks of Captain Alexander Hamilton, 1688-1723*, ed. Sir William Foster, London, 1739, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1995, Vol. I, p. 166.
[238] Sahay, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
[239] Jaffar, S.M., *Education in Muslim India*, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

students in proportion to their proficiency.[240] He even confiscated the building belonging to the Dutch in Lucknow, known as Firangi Mahal and had it converted into a madrasah and gave it even to the families of Muslim scholars.[241]

Muslim education in India during the period under study was given by three agencies as follows: (a) Schools and colleges (b) mosques and monasteries and (c) private houses[242] that represented the higher, secondary and primary stages of education respectively. Religion formed the basis of education henceforth, most of the *makhtaba* and *madrasas* were attached to *masjids* (mosques). Emperor Akbar was the first to introduce some effective changes in the educational system then in vogue,[243] so that religion and secular education could be imparted at the same time.

The primary or elementary education was given in *'makhtabs'* or primary schools and the private houses that were found everywhere in country. The age of the beginners varied from four to five years particularly the Mughal princes. Babur sent Humayun to Madrasah at the age of four years four months and four days.[244] Humayun sent Akbar and Akbar sent Jahangir on the same age.[245] Manucci informs that the education of the royal princes normally began when they attained the age of five years and then they were made over to learned men and courteous enunuchs who taught them reading, writing as well as liberal and literary arts.[246]

The ceremony of putting a child to a *'makhtab'* was commonly known as *'Bismillahkhani'* or *'Makhtab Ceremony'*.[247] At the hour fixed, generally in consultation with an astrologer, the child began his first academic lesson from his teacher.[248] The Muslim nobles would not necessarily send their children to school, but usually employed tutors to teach them at home.[249] Whereas, Mandelslo observes, "Muslims took special interest to educate their sons as soon as they reached the school joining age appears to be true only in case of the highly placed class of Muslim

---

[240] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 292.
[241] *Ibid.*
[242] Jaffar, S.M., *The Mughal Empire from Babur to Aurangzeb*, Ess Ess, Delhi, 1936, p. 386.
[243] *Ain*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 288-89.
[244] *AkbarNama*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 201.
[245] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
[246] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 346-47.
[247] Ashraf, K., M., "*Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*", J.A.S.B., 1935, Vol. I, Article No. 4, p. 249.
[248] *Ibid.*
[249] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

nobles. The common Mohammadan was reluctant to attend to his studies and preferred to be trained in the art of warfare and to be enlisted in the Imperial Army where he could hope for a bright future.[250]

The secondary education was imparted in mosques and *'khanqas'* (Muslim monasteries) which included both secular as well as religious education. These mosques were numerous in numbers. *Khanqahs* were started by religious persons who were held in high esteem. These places played a prominent part in the diffusion of knowledge in the country. The subjects taught were grammar, logic, rhetoric, theology, metaphysics, literature, jurisprudence and sciences. The medium of instruction in these schools was Persian.

Higher education was imparted in the 'Madrasas' or colleges which were situated in towns and cities. The Muslim seats of learning were Agra, Lahore, Ahmadabad, Burhanpur, Jaunpur, Sirhind, Thaneswar and Ambala.[251] Delhi, Gujarat, Kashmir, Fathehpur Sikri, Lucknow, Gwalior and Sialkot were also important seats of Muslim education but were not mentioned in travelogues.

Hindu education was imparted mainly through agencies like tols, pathshalas and private tutors. The teacher in these educational institutions was in most cases, Brahmans, and they had practically monopolised the teaching profession.[252]

The primary education to Hindu boys was given by the *pathshalas*. Generally, these *pathshalas* had their own buildings. In some cases when a suitable accommodation for the *pathshala* could not be found in towns or villages, it would sit in some spacious buildings attached to a rich man's mansion or even under the shade of a tree.[253] In the absence of modern school equipments, a student in the elementary school was first of all, required to practice the art of writing on the floor, covered with sand or dust. A novice in such schools was, first of all, required to acquire knowledge of the alphabet. Then he was given some lessons in attaining proficiency in spelling, reading and writing followed by a working knowledge of practical arithmetic. After a general smattering of the above subjects, a student in such *pathshalas* was required to

---

[250] Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
[251] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 210, Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 414, Hamilton, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 365-66.
[252] Bernier, *op. cit.*, pp. 234-35, Bowrey, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-6, *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 127, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 224.
[253] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 334.

study grammar, which contained the declension, conjugation, syntax etc. When he had acquired a sound knowledge of Sanskrit and its grammar, the *Puranas* formed his next subject of study.[254]

Royal Education

The education of the Mughal royal princes found special attention in the accounts of the travellers which may be assigned to the special care and concern paid by the reigning monarch in the academic training and achievement to the royal princes. Father Du Jarric writes, *"His Majesty (Akbar) came often to see what his sons were learning."*[255] Another instance from the account of Father Monserrate cited is, *"He (Akbar) gave the prince's tutor authority to punish his pupils if they committed any offence."*[256]

The education of the royal princes commenced at the age of five when they were taught to read and write the language.[257] Very learned men[258] were assigned as tutors to educate the royal princes. Besides, the princes were also put under excellent trainers to learn the use of arms, riding and archery. The trainers gave great care and attention to the education of the princes who were trained rigorously in seclusion.[259] The accounts of Bernier and Manucci are very significant in relation with the princely education under the Mughals.

The dissatisfaction of the Emperor Aurangzeb's in the useless instructions given to the princes for which he seems to be rebuking his teacher is commonly cited by secondary authors. Aurangzeb emphasised that the teachings of princes should be in history, geography, languages and customs of the neighbouring states, the art of warfare as well as that of laying siege and concluded peace and the principles of good government.[260]

Emperor Akbar had even permitted Jesuit Fathers to open the 'Portuguese School' in the empire, for those, who desire to read and write Portuguese so that the doctrines of

---

[254] *Ibid.* p. 335.
[255] Jarric, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
[256] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
[257] Manucci, *op. cit.*, II. p. 323.
[258] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, p. 203, Shaikh Faizi was employed as tutor to see the princes.
[259] *Ibid.*
[260] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

Christianity could be taught more easily.[261] Akbar had admitted his second son prince Murad to this 'school' where his schoolmates were the children of the princes and higher nobility.[262] Father Antonio Monserrate was entrusted as the tutor of prince Murad.[263]

[261] Jarric, *op. cit.*, p. 69, Monserrate, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52.
[262] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52.
[263] *Ibid.*, p. 36

CHAPTER – IV

CHAPTER-IV

Economic Life As Depicted By the Foreign Travellers of 16th and 17th Century

Foreign travellers portrayed the economic prosperity in India during 16th and 17th century. They carved an interesting picture of the economic life enjoyed by the people of India. On one side where the life of the affluent section of society was opulent and luxurious indulging themselves in a life of debauchery and extravagance. On the other side, the middle segment and the poorer masses were not luxurious but to some extent satisfactory.

Not only in Northern India, the economic prosperity of Vijayanagar also well-documented in the accounts of Nuniz and Paes. There were certain factors that contributed to the sound economy of the Vijayanagar kingdom. The development of agriculture and the resultant agrarian surplus was a potential factor in the growth of the kingdom's wealth. Another major factor was the development of industries, such as textiles, mining, metullargy, diamonds, perfumes, salt, etc. Vijayanagar's flourishing trade and commerce was yet another important factor contributing towards economic development. Internal trade within the kingdom was conducted by the well-organized merchant and craft-guilds, while external trade was carried on by the Arabs and Portuguese traders. Calicut, Cochin, Pulicat, Bhatkal, and Mangalore were the chief ports of the kingdom, abuzz with trading activities. The many countries with which Vijayanagara had commercial relations included the islands in the Indian Ocean, Malay, Burma, China, Abyssinia, South-Africa and Persia.

The factors that contributed to this economic prosperity during the period were the surplus in agricultural and non-agricultural output, well-developed industries, flourishing trade and commerce and well-built transportation system that are well-narrated by the travellers.

Agricultural Production

The Indian economy was predominantly agrarian in character back from the Indian history as it was during sixteenth and seventeenth century. The Sultans of Medieval India since from their early days had well understood the benefits of extension of cultivation and production of better quality crops. They took measures for the multiplicity of crops in their domain. Muhammad bin Tughlaq had founded a regular department for bringing new areas under cultivation and to improve existing crops known as *Diwan-i-amir-Kohi*.[1] Other occupations were also in prevalence but agriculture dominated all occupations which are confirmed by the observations of foreign travellers and other contemporary sources also.

The outsiders had witnessed the abundance of food grains, horticulture and livestock in all over the Hindu kingdom of South India to the empire of the great Mughals in the North India for both the centuries.

The agricultural output of raw materials depended mainly on climate including rainfall, fertility of soil and agricultural improvement policy of state, land tenure system, irrigation facilities, livestock, transport facilities and peace.[2]

The fertility of soil, abundance of victuals, livestock and fruits are the most talked topics in almost every travelogue. Other matter concerning the agricultural production is scanty and scattered. Regarding the method of cultivation of crops that too rice is dealt in some travelogues. Barbosa had given a detailed method of rice cultivation in Majandur town situated on a small river along the coast towards Malabar.[3] The method of sowing by a drill in the ploughshare is remarkable.[4] At Calicut, the cultivation of rice was made by ploughing by oxen as in the European countries.[5] Terry confirms this method of rice cultivation when visited western India in the reign of Jahangir. He further informs us that, *"their seed time is in May and the beginning of June; their harvest in November and December which were the most*

---

[1] Qureshi, I. H., *The Administration of Sultanate of Delhi*, 4th ed., Historical Society, Karachi, Pakistan, 1958, p.122.

[2] Sarkar, Jagdish Narayan, *Mughal Economy: Organisation and Working*, Naya Prokash, Calcutta, 1987, p. 8.

[3] Barbosa, Duarte, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, English tr. and ed. Mansel Longworth Dames, 1918-21, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi (rpt. 1989), Vol. I, p. 192.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Varthema, Ludovico Di, *The Itinerary of Ludovico Di Varthema of Bologna from 1502 to 1508*, English tr. John Winter Jones, 1863, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi (rpt. 1997), p. 66.

temperate months in India."[6]

The crops were irrigated by rivers and lakes.[7] Rainfall also enhanced the fertility of soil. Many references are found of artificial irrigation in South as well as in North India in the travelogues which had a good corroboration in other contemporary sources. In the kingdom of Narsimha the tank has three large pillars connected above with certain pipes by which they get water when they have to irrigate their gardens and rice-fields.[8] All the water in the city of Vijayanagar comes from the two tanks.[9] The common crops produced were wheat, grain, rice and millet.[10] Peas, beans and other pulses were also cultivated.[11]

The output of agricultural production depends mainly on the fertility of soil anywhere. The fertility of Indian soil is very famous in the minds of the foreigners and they never missed the chance to tell this fact about Indian soil. The fertility of Bengal,[12] Deccan,[13] and Sindh[14] and Surat[15] soil was recorded by almost all the travellers. The Deccan soil is fertile throughout, being watered by many rivers and streams.[16] The Malabar Coast is good country, fertile and salubrious and supplies much wealth and commodities to Goa and other parts.[17] Exceptionally, the soil of Goa was found to be unproductive because of its geography.[18] The fertility of Bengal also recorded during the reign of Shahjahan by Francois Bernier.[19] This fertility was due to the climate which was found very good and healthy as the abundance of rainfall recorded throughout India for cultivation.[20]

The fertility of soil was the major factor that leads to the abundance of food

---

[6] Foster, William (ed.), *Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*, London, 1921, Low Price Publication, Delhi, 1999, p. 298.

[7] Robert, Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1924, First Indian Edition, 1962. p. 235.

[8] *Ibid.* p. 237.

[9] *Ibid.* p. 248.

[10] *Ibid.* p. 348.

[11] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 200.

[12] Laval, Francois Pyard, *The Voyage of Francois Pyard of Laval to the East Indies, The Maldives, The Moluccas and Brazil*, English tr. Albert Gray, (Assisted by H.C.P. Bell), London, 1887, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 2000, Vol. I, p. 327.

[13] *Ibid.* Vol. II, p. 136.

[14] Linschoten, John Huyghen Van, *The Voyage of John Huyghen Van Linschoten To the East Indies*, English tr. and ed. Arthur Coke Burnell and P.A. Tiele, London, 1885, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1988, p. 55.

[15] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 296.

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.* Vol. II, p. 256.

[18] *Ibid.* Vol. II, p. 28.

[19] Bernier, Francois, *Travels in the Mughal Empire A.D. 1656-1668*, Tr. and ed., Archibald Constable and Vincent A. Smith, first published, 1934, Low Price Publications, Delhi, rpt., 1989, p. 439.

[20] Laval, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 34, 255, also see *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 298.

grains throughout the period. This abundance was appreciated by almost every traveler. Due to abundance the food grains were very cheap. Abbe Carre write about the cheapness of food at Madras, Surat, Goa, Bijapur, Golconda and Bombay in 1672-74. He writes, *"Food is very cheap: five pounds of rice for 3 sols (3d.) I say, rice, because it is the principal food of these people, as wheat is in Europe; three dozen fowls for an ecu (4s.6d); the largest pig costs 30 sols (2s. 6d.); a sheep or goat 20 sols (1s. 8d); butter, wheat, vegetables, herbs, fruits, fish, and other such provisions are to be had in abundance."*[21] Abul Fazl corroborates the above statement.[22]

The abundance of foodstuffs in the country and the extraordinary cheapness of the provisions are the remarkable features of the period which affected the prices and wages also. Prices and wages were also felt low by the travellers. See table-1 for the prices of commodities by Peter Mundy.[23]

Quick silver	At 3 ½ Rs.	Per seer.
Vermillion	at 4 "	"
Nutmegs	at 4 "	"
Cloves	at 5 ½ "	"
Cardamom (Ilaichi)	at 1 ¾ "	"
Saffron (Kishtwari)	at 16 "	"
Saffron (Kashmiri)	at 10 "	"
Pepper	at 24 "	Per maund.
Dry ginger	at 10 "	"
Alum	At 8 "	"
Nausadar	at 10 "	"
Bachch	at 9 "	"

Table-1

The references of low wages are also made during the period. Terry says that servants were obtained for 5 shillings, or say two rupees a month, and he says that,

---

[21] Carre, Abbe, *The Travels of Abbe Carre in India and the Near East, 1672-74*, English tr. & ed., Lady Fawcett & Charles Fawcett, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1990, Vol. II, p. 596.

[22] Fazl Abul, Ain-i-Akbari, English tr. Blochmann, revised by Phillot Vol. I (reprint-first published, 1927), Calcutta, 1965; H.S. Jarrett, revised by J.N. Sarkar, Vol. II & III (2nd edition – first published 1949), Delhi, 1965, Vol. I, p. 62.

[23] Mundy, Peter, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*, ed. R.C. Temple, Hakluyt Society, London, 1914. Vol. II, pp. 153-54.

they would send half the sum home.[24] "A simple servant, who is not an officer, commonly in the best houses, between wages, victuals and clothing, stands not in more than three rupees a month, amounting to about ten shilling sterling."[25] The wages paid to the miners at the diamond mines in South India struck Tavernier as very low, even a skilled man earned 3 pagodas in a year which was less than a rupee a month.[26] Fryer writes that washer man and craftsman work well for little money but does not record their wages.[27] Streynsham Master also gives the low wages of East India Company's servants at Hugli in 1678-79.[28] (See table-2).

Post	**Wages**
The Chief	12 Rs. per mensem
The Second	8 "
The Minister	6 "
The 3rd of Council	5 "
The 4th of Council	5 "
The Chyrurgeon	4 "
The Secretary	4 "
The Steward	2 "
Subordinate for the Chief	6 "
Subordinate for the second	4 "
Subordinate for the Third	3 "
The Barber	2 "

Table-2

The sufficient output of provisions and food grains throughout the period under study gave way to the cultivation of cash crops which were increasing in demand for feeding industries and exporting abroad.[29] The major cash crops were indigo, opium,

---

[24] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, pp. 318-19.

[25] Della Valle, Pietro, *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India, 1623-24*, ed. Edward Grey, 2 Vols., Hakluyt Society, London, 1892, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, rpt. 1991, Vol. I, p. 42.

[26] Tavernier, Jean-Baptiste, *Travels In India*, English tr. & ed. V. Ball and William Crooke, Low Price Publications, Delhi, rpt., 2000, Vol. II, p. 46.

[27] Fryer, John, *A New Account of East India and Persia Being Nine Years' 1672-81*, ed. William Crooke, Hakluyt Society, London, 1909, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1992, Vol. II, p. 122.

[28] Master, Streynsham, *the Diaries of Streynsham Master, (1675-1680)*, ed., R.C. Temple, London, Published For the Govt. of India, 1911, Vol. II, pp. 334-35.

[29] Naqvi, Hameeda Khatoon, *Urbanisation and Urban Centres under the Great Mughals, 1556-1707*,

sugarcane, spices, tobacco, cotton and silk. Besides there demand in the increased overseas trade these crops also satisfied the needs of industries at home which is amply supported by the foreign travellers.

Industries

Industries are helpful in the growth and development of the economy of a country. The flourishing industries increase the national wealth and prosperity provide an impetus to the trade and commerce of the nation. In India, industries especially associated with rural and agricultural life continued since long but a speedy development took place in the seventeenth century with the Europeans entry into the Indian Ocean and their active trade involving export of a number of Indian products into the western world.

Thus, the industries were divided under two broader categories during medieval times in India, (a) The rural crafts (b) The urban industries. The rural system was based practically on self- sufficiency barring only those which happened to be on the outskirts of the cities and towns. Among the village manufacturers mention may be made of unrefined sugar, weaving, carpentering etc. The village crafts were mostly confined to black, gold and silver smithy, shoe manufacturing and oil; other minor industries were cap making, basket making etc.

The urban industries had a different pattern for the State and the private establishments. The private enterprise had given way to merchant middleman who was a centrifugal force to all economic activities.[30] Rarely the independence of manufacturing from marketing was kept intact.[31] The private enterprises were subject to hardships at the hands of the State officials.[32] Unlike the private establishments the Imperial workshops or the 'Royal Karkhanas' were not meant for any public good except for meeting the huge royal demand. The activities of the State in the fields of production increased considerably from the beginning of the Muslim Rule in India. They extended from primary to secondary industries in the industrial sphere and from foreign to inland trade in the commercial field. Among State industries mention may be made of textiles (silk and wool), metals and minerals, embroidery, salt, saltpeter

---

Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Lucknow, 1972, Vol. I, p.23.

[30] Master, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 14.

[31] Moreland, W. H., *India at the Death of Akbar, an Economic Study*, Low Price Publications, Delhi, (1920, rpt. 1990), p. 186-187.

[32] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 256, Pelsaert, Francisco, *The Remonstrantie*, English tr. W.H. Moreland and P. Geyl, Jahangir's India, Cambridge, 1925, Low Price Publications, New Delhi, rpt. 2001, p. 60.

and indigo. There were at least as many as thirty-six 'Karkhanas' in the reign of Akbar, which appear to have increased in number in the later period according to the authority of the Zawabit-i-Alamgiri.[33] This fact has further been corroborated in the middle of the seventeenth century by the French traveller, Francois Bernier, who saw these factories at work during his visit to the Mughal Capital. Within the fortress "large halls were seen in many places, called 'karkhanas' or workshops for the artisans."[34] He has given a vivid description of the working of various karkhanas within the imperial fort.[35]

Thus, from the accounts of foreign travellers as well as from other sources of the period it is clear that State workshops and the private industrial units were important constituents of medieval Indian economy. The impact of rulers' indifference towards private producers was made complete by the explosion of foreign trade. A systematic study of all the important industries existing during the sixteenth and the seventeenth century is made below.

Cotton was extensively grown in the country for satisfying the needs of the cotton textiles industry. The quality of Indian cotton textiles produced was excellent.

The cotton textile industry was spread throughout the country but the concentration was more in northern India during the Mughal period whereas in south there was no such concentration owing to the little internal need for clothing, lesser still for warm clothing as founded by Varthema, Barbosa and Thevenot.[36] In spite of the less need due to hot climate some centers of cotton textile industry grew up there for external demand. Goa, Chaul, Mysore, Malabar, Mutfili in and Andhra – desa, Kanpamei near Calicut, Pulicat and Budihal in the Chitradurga region, were the important centres of cotton textiles.

Different kinds of cotton stuffs such as *calicoes*, *turbans*, *muslins*, *bucrams* and *muslin cloakes* were manufactured in these centres. Pulicat enjoyed repute for its

---

[33] Sarkar, J. N., *Mughal Administration*, (Fourth Edition), M. C. Sarkar and Sons, Calcutta, 1952, p. 170. "The *Zawabit-i-Alamgiri* gives a list of 69 *Karkhanas*. The *Ain-i-Akbari* separately describes 26 of the *karkhanas* and indirectly or briefly refers to 10 others, making a total of 36."

[34] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

[35] *Ibid.* "In one hall embroiderers are busily employed, Superintended by a master. In another you see goldsmiths; in a third painters; in a fourth varnishers in lacquer work; in a fifth joiners, turners, tailors, shoe-makers; in a sixth manufacturers of silk, brocade and those fine muslins of which are made turbans, girdles with golden flowers, and drawers worn by females....beautifully embroidered with needle work."

[36] Thevenot, Jean de, *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, ed., Surendranath Sen, The National Archives of India, Queensway, New Delhi, 1949, p. 123. As regards the minimum use of dress, Thevenot says that in Malabar, "they go stark naked from the girdle upwards, and hence no other clothing from the girdle to the knee, but a piece of cloth."

printed cotton textiles similar to the chintz of North India.[37]

In North India the industry was concentrated at Lahore, Delhi, Agra, Awadh, Jaunpur, Allahabad, Benares, Patna, Dacca, Lucknow and Gujarat. At Chaul cotton stuffs were manufactured in great abundance.[38] Lahore produced seven varieties of cotton textiles, of which *ormesins*[39] and the *Machhiwara baftas*[40] seem to have been more popular. In the Lahore subah, Sialkot and Gujarat were noted for their embroidered cotton fabrics. The red *salu* and *chintz* of Sarhind attracted Persian and Armenian traders.[41] Delhi was known for its *chintz* and *quilts*.[42] *Guzees* were manufactured in Gokul situated in Mathura.[43] Agra produced carpets[44] and a large number of white cotton stuffs.[45] Saharanpur was famed for it *chautars* and *khasa*.[46] The *mercools* and *daryabadis* of Lucknow attracted a large number of European merchants.[47] Jaunpur was reputed for the specialisation in the production of *carpets*, *turbans*, *girdles* and *calicoes*.[48] The varieties called *jholis* and *mihirkul* were produced at Mau and Jalalabad in the Allahabad sarkar and also at Benares.[49] Banaras also manufactured other stuffs such as *turbans*, *girdles*, *sarees* and *gangajal*.[50] The trade in textiles enriched Banaras. Patna and its neighbourhood produced a variety of coarse cloth called *Amertees*.[51]

The demand for the products of this industry at home and abroad increased the production considerably. The industry not only progressed quantitatively but also qualitatively. The foreign travellers were astonished to note the excellence and

---

[37] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 132.
[38] Varthema, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
[39] Pelsaert, Francisco, *The Remonstrantie*. English tr. W.H. Moreland and P. Geyl. Jahangir's India. Cambridge, 1925, Low Price Publications, New Delhi, rpt. 2001op. cit., p. 9.
[40] *The English Factories in India, (1618-1669)*, ed., William Foster. Clarendon, Oxford, (1906-27), Vol. 8(1646-50), p. 100.
[41] *Ibid.* Vol. 6(1637-41), p. 134.
[42] *Ibid.* Manrique, Fray Sebastien, *Travels of Fray Sebastien Manrique, 1629-1643*, ed., C.E. Luard & Father H. Hosten, Hakluyt Society, London, 1926, Vol. II, p. 280, *English Factories, op. cit.*, Vol. 6 (1637-41), p. 134.
[43] *English Factories, op. cit.*, Vol. 7(1642-45), p. 300.
[44] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 57.
[45] *English Factories, op. cit.*, Vol. 1(1618-21), pp. 61, 76, Manucci, Niccolao, *Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India 1653-1708*, English tr. & ed. William Irvine, London, 1907, Low Price Publications, Delhi, rpt., 1990Vol. II, p. 424.
[46] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. II, 297.
[47] *English Factories, op. cit.*, Vol. 6(1637-41), p. 278. Vol. 9(1651-54), p. 52.
[48] *Ibid.* Vol. 1(1618-21), p. 195, Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
[49] Ain, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 169.
[50] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
[51] *English Factories, op. cit.*, Vol. 9(1651-54), p. 52, Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

fineness of the cloth produced in the country. The accounts of Tavernier[52] and Manucci[53] are particularly important for inland and foreign trade in cotton goods, which are virtually ignored by the Persian chronicles. India supplied these stuffs to the markets on the east coast of Africa, in Arabia, Egypt, Burma and Malacca and to a lesser extent in Philippines and perhaps Mexico as well.[54]

Silk was prepared from silk worms which were fed on mulberry trees.[55] This method of rearing silk worms for obtaining raw silk is called sericulture. Raw silk was produced in Kashmir and Bengal within the imperial territory whereas the silk textile industry was located in Bengal, Gujarat, Ahmadabad, Surat, Patna, Cambay and Kashmir in the north and Coimbatore and West coast in the south. At Coimbatore dyed silk garments were manufactured which were so costly that they were sold for 100 *varahas* or gold coins per piece (5feet width, 13 feet length) of cloth. Velvets, satin, silks and carpets were manufactured on the Western coast.[56]

The importance of silk textiles increased with growing demand of the manufactured silk items all over the country for different purposes by the members of royal family, nobles and by the rich merchants also. The foremost usage was in the making of garments by the upper class. The kings of Malabar used silk coats which were open in front coming down to the middle of the thigh.[57] Nuniz writes about the king of Vijayanagar that, *"His clothes are silk cloth (pachoiis) of very fine material and worked with gold, which are worth each one ten pardaos."*[58]

In the Mughal Empire, various silk products were manufactured in the Imperial workshops or the *Royal Karkhanas* for royal household from the yarn obtained from the private spinners. Besides the production of cloth, silk carpets mixed with gold of superior quality were also manufactured in the royal *karkhanas* whereas the private workshops produced silk stuffs for local need and for the foreign trade.

The production and export of silk clothes were recorded by the various travellers like Varthema, Linschoten, Laval, Fitch, Terry, Peter Mundy, Manrique, Tavernier, Bernier, Manucci, Streynsham Master, Hedges. Varthema writes that from

---

[52] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5, 7, 42-43, 46.
[53] Manucci, Niccolao, *Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India 1653-1708*, English tr. & ed. William Irvine, London. 1907, Low Price Publications, Delhi, rpt., 1990, Vol. II, pp. 421, 424-31.
[54] *India at the Death of Akbar, op. cit.*, pp. 180-81.
[55] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 286, 418, Master, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 19-24.
[56] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 141-144, *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 302.
[57] *Ibid.* Vol. II, p. 7.
[58] *A Fogotten Empire, op. cit.*, p. 363.

Bengal (Satgaon) went silk stuff to, *"all Turkey, through Syria, through Persia, through Arabia Felix, through Ethiopia and through all India."*[59] In India the Bengal silk was exported to Gujarat which was woven into fabrics at Ahmadabad and Surat. Potalas (soft silk) decorated with flowers of different colour were manufactured at Ahmadabad. Their price varied from rupee 8 to 40 a piece.[60]

By the seventeenth century, the silken stuff fabricated in Bengal was of considerable fine texture and the embroidery too was exquisite adroitly done both by men and women.[61] The quality of Bengal silk not being of a high order, its low range of prices[62] had helped to popularize the stuffs and its demand had consequently grown. Besides silk there was *'silk herbs'*[63] similar to silk found in Bengal. Fitch had called it '*Yerva*'.

At Gujarat and Cambay very fine silk muslins were produced. However, spinning operation were the monopoly of Gujarat, Ahmadabad and Surat.[64] At the Imperial workshops of Ahmadabad, Agra, Lahore and Gujarat skillful workmen from different parts of the country were employed. Regarding spinning Abul Fazl states, *"All kinds of silk spinning were brought to perfection."*[65] Silk carpets mixed with gold of superior quality were also manufactured at Surat and in the city of Cambay.[66] Similarly, west coast, Cambay, and Surat specialized in colour velvet, velvety satins and taffetas.[67] But not so rich as those of Italy.[68] From Gujarat and Cambay, silk goods were exported to the Philippines, Borneo, Java, Sumatra and other neighboring countries.[69]

Raw silks were also imported from abroad for producing silk fabrics as well as mixed goods such as *patolas*. The silk produced in Bengal to the tune of 2½ million pounds, in Patna to the extent of 1,000 to 2,000 mds, were not sufficient for the local industry hence a large quality was imported from Persia and China.[70] Superior quality of foreign silk was another reason. Even the Bengal silk which was credited best in

---

[59] Varthema, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
[60] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 2-4.
[61] Laval, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 329.
[62] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 440.
[63] Laval, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 328, *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 26.
[64] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 2-8.
[65] *Ain, op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 94
[66] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 2.
[67] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, pp. 206, 302.
[68] *Ibid.* p. 302.
[69] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 2-4.
[70] *India at the Death of Akbar, op. cit.*, p. 173-75.

India was not comparable to that of Persia or Syria.[71] China silk was brought at Chaul.[72]

Gold and silver are important precious metals found in nature which can be procured either by mining or by soil and sand washing.[73] These metals were used by the upper strata of society because of its non-affordability by the common peoples. The common use of these metals was in making ornaments, utensils and in embroidery industries also. Besides, there were also used in giving presents, making thrones, arm and armaments etc.

These metals were abundantly used by the kings and nobility i.e., the upper strata in different purposes. The richness of Indian kings and nobles are described by various travellers.[74] Varthema writes, *"The King of Narsimha is the richest king I have ever heard of."* further he adds, *"the king wears a cap of gold brocade, two spans long, and his garment is full of gold piaster and having all round it jewels of various kinds."*[75] The plenty of gold and silver was noticed by almost all the travellers.[76] The currency system depended mainly on the two metals during the period which is proved by the accounts of foreign travellers.[77] This is corroborated by other contemporary sources. The abundance can be felt even more severely when it come to knowledge that at Goa, Lord used to make presents of gold pieces to the strangers also.[78] Peoples also used to throw gold in the rivers as a part of their belief.[79]

At Vijayanagara the gold was commonly used by the peoples in ornaments.[80] At Malabar daily wages were given in gold to Nairs when the kings went to war.[81] There were vessels of gold and silver in the Vijayanagara Empire.[82] Vessels of gold

---

[71] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 439-40.
[72] Linschoten, *op. cit.*, Vol I, p. 64.
[73] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 23.
[74] Varthema, op. cit., p. 53, *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, pp. 101, 310.
[75] *Ibid.*
[76] Monserrate, Father Antonio, *Mongolicae legationis Commentarius*, ed., John S. Hoyland (tr.) and S.N. Banerjee (annotator), Commentary of Father Monserrate, 1922, Asian Publishers, Jalandhar, 1993, p. 36. Father Monserrate at Agra writes. "Gold and silver are in plenty."
[77] Varthema, *op. cit.* p. 53. Barbosa, *op. cit.*, pp. Vol I, 156, 191, 204, *A Forgotten Empire, op. cit.*, pp. 248 and 270, Purchas, Samuel, *Hakluyt Posthumus or Purchas his Pilgrimes, Contayning A History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and Others*, Glasgow, James MacLehose, 1905, Vol. X, p. 99, Linschoten, *op. cit.*, pp.187, 241, 246, Laval, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 344, 350, Vol. II, p. 69, *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p.302
[78] Laval, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 367, *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, pp. 15, 267.
[79] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, pp. 28, 269, 323.
[80] Purchas, *op. cit.*, Vol. X, p. 99.
[81] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 52
[82] *A Forgotten Empire, op. cit.*, pp. 275, 363

were also used in north India.[83] The wives of kings were covered with gold and his throne was of gold and precious stones.[84] Silver was used by the common women in making ornaments in Bengal.[85]

The goldsmiths and silversmiths were residing in every city which marks the flourishing state of gold and silver industries during the period under study. There were great no. of artisans, inn workers and goldsmiths at Agra.[86] Their art was confined to various families which formed a group of its own resulting into a sub-caste. At Malabar, there existed a caste of Goldsmith.[87] Besides the art of making ornaments they were also expert in the art of setting of stones in gold. Appreciating the art of goldsmiths at Agra, Thevenot writes, *"They have a way in the form of working in gold upon Agat, Crystal and other figures and also enchase stone upon them. They cut leaves of gold to fill up the void spaces of the figures."*[88] Gujarat and Ahmadabad was very famous for studded jewellery of gold and precious stones of a number of varieties.[89]

Though, it is generally accepted that there was scarcity of gold and silver as the production was negligible during the sixteenth and seventeenth century.[90] But, the travelogues and even other contemporary sources indicate the lavish use of these metals by the upper strata. This abundance was due to the import of these metals.[91]

The copper was obtained from the copper ore through the indigenous method of smelting. It was produced in large quantities up to the time of Emperor Akbar. Copper was in abundance in Vijayanagara.[92] At Bhatkal, it was used for the manufacture of coins, cooking pots and other vessels.[93] Copper industries were spread over the country from one corner to another. Each *suba* had two or more centers noted for copper and brass works.[94] Northern India depended entirely on the produce of local mines whereas the south was furnished mainly with the supplies imported from

---

[83] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 180.
[84] *A Forgotten Empire, op. cit.*, pp. 260, 328, 351, 358
[85] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 28.
[86] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
[87] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 63.
[88] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.
[89] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 425, Pant, D, *The Commercial Policy of Moghals*, Idarah-i-Adabiyat, Delhi, rpt. 1978, p. 237.
[90] Sarkar, Jagdish Narayan, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
[91] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 12-13, *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, pp. 112, 302.
[92] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 203.
[93] *Ibid.* Vol. I, p. 191.
[94] Watt, G., *Commercial Products in India, being an abridgement of the dictionary of the Economic Products of India*, Today and Tomorrows', New Delhi, 1966, p. 402

outside.[95] In the sixteenth century the urban coppersmith constituted an important section of artisans at Ahmadabad, Golconda and Goa.[96]

The scarcity of copper occurred in the region of Akbar more so perhaps because it came to be used not only to supplement the silver currency but was also, to a certain extent, employed as its substitute. This may be inferred from the fact that Akbar had elevated the copper dam as a standard coin along with the silver rupee.[97] Another reason was the failure of copper mines of Rajputana and Central India since Akbar's reign. By the mid-seventeenth century, it is recorded that the Portuguese, English and the Dutch traders on the eastern ports had started bringing in large quantity of copper from Japan.[98]

There existed copper mines in the subas of Agra at Parath, Singhanah, Udaipur, Kotputli, Khodana of Oudh, the village Dokan near Bahraich and of Ajmer at certain places.[99] The copper mines at Singhana were recorded by Tavernier also.[100] The South was deficient in the production of copper but the metal was not altogether absent.

Iron ores were located in Mysore especially in Chikkanayakanahalli, and Kolar districts.[101] In Northern India, it was found in the Lahore subah, in the Ajmer subah at Kalinjar, Gwalior and Kumaon.[102] Iron mines were found at Hyderabad and Assam.[103] Iron was plentiful in Rajasthan where it was used for making arms,[104] particularly at Mewar and Bikaner.[105] It was largely used for military purposes, for manufacturing swords, bows, arrows, bucklers, daggers and battle axes.[106] It was also employed in making household articles such as lamps, bedsteads and utensils. The 'best iron' along the east coast was mostly sold by the blacksmiths and iron founders at Narsapur shipyard at reasonable rates and all sorts of iron works like spikes, bolts and anchors were ingeniously performed by natives.[107]

---

[95] *From Akbar to Aurangzeb, op. cit.*, p. 183
[96] Linschoten, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 229.
[97] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
[98] *English Factories, op. cit.*, Vol. 3 (1624-29), p. 181, Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 203.
[99] Ain, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 183.
[100] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 23, 220, 227.
[101] *A Forgotten Empire, op. cit.*, p. 369.
[102] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 170, 192, 285, 321.
[103] Tavernier, *op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 127, Vol. II, pp.220-22.
[104] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 432.
[105] Watt, *op. cit.*, p. 682.
[106] *A Forgotten Empire, op. cit.*, pp. 265-67.
[107] Bowrey, Thomas, *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal, 1669-1679*, ed., R.C. Temple, Hakluyt Society, Cambridge, 1905, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1993, p.

Export of iron goods from Choromandel to Batavia began in the sixties of the seventeenth century. Iron was the only metal in which India was more than self-sufficient.

The existence of diamond mines in India was testified by a no of foreign travellers such as Ludovico de Varthema, Barbosa, Nuniz, Jourdain, Tavernier and Fryer.[108] The diamond fields were mainly located in the Kurnool and Anantpur districts, especially at Vajra Karur in Andhradesha. Tavernier had visited diamond mines of Ramalkota, Kollur and Bengal and has described their their working in detail.[109] Similar description is found in Fryer's account also.[110]

The bigger diamonds were included in the Royal treasury as nobody had got the right to possess or transact it. The ruler of the country of the Ghats, Adappanayaha, had to hand over to the king of Vijayanagàr all diamonds above twenty *mangelins* (about twenty five carats) in weight.[111] John Jourdain during the reign of Jahangir writes at Agra that none was allowed to sell any diamond above five carats within the dominion.[112] If anybody was found doing he had to suffer the death punishment.[113] Different travellers had given size of diamond above which it was included in the royal possession.[114] Tavernier observes that above 60 carats it came to royal possession.

Regarding the price fixation of diamonds Barbosa and Tavernier had given some details. The diamond[115] weighing one Mangiar (in Telugu *manjali*) was worth 30 *fanams*. The price was fetched on the basis of size and not on the weight. Thus, the bigger diamonds, though of the same weight, fetched a higher price. The four diamonds of the same weight (i.e., one *manjali*) were worth 60 *fanams*, and one diamond of the same weight was worth 100 *fanams*, finally one diamond of 8

102.

[108] Varthema, *op. cit.*, pp. 45, 48, Barbosa, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, p. 202, *A Forgotten Empire, op. cit.*, p. 369, Tavernier, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 60-61, Fryer, John, *A New Account of East India and Persia Being Nine Years' 1672-81*, ed. William Crooke, Hakluyt Society, London, 1909, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1992, Vol. II, p. 438.

[109] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 60-61.

[110] Fryer, *op. cit.*, Vol I, p. 314, Vol. II, p. 438.

[111] *A Forgotten Empire, op. cit.*, p. 369.

[112] Jourdain, John, *The Journal of John Jourdain 1608-1617, Describing His Experiences in Arabia, India, And The Malay Archipelago*, ed. William Foster, Hakluyt Society, Cambridge, 1905, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, rpt. 1992, p. 164.

[113] *Ibid.*

[114] Linschoten, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 377, Barbosa, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 226 (Garcia de Orta).

[115] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 221. He was talking about the false diamond fabricated in India.

mangiars fetched 1,400 *fanams*.[116] Tavernier also gives the method of price fixation in vogue at that time for any good or bad diamond which has a weight of 3 up to 100 carats.[117] If perfect in quality, the carat weight of the diamond is squared and the product multiplied by 150 *livres*. In this way the price of a diamond of 12 carats would be, 12x12x150 *livres* = 21600 *livres*. If not perfect, the carat weight of the diamond is squared further multiplied by 60, 80 or 100 *livres*, the unit values for a carat according to the degree of perfection of the stone.

The king of Vijayanagar possessed a great treasure which includes diamonds and other precious metals.[118] After the fall of Vijayanagar its diamond trade was captured by Goa, "the greatest mart for small diamonds".

Saltpeter was an important commodity craft that was carried on by the peasants for cooling water as early as the 16th -17th century.[119] With the increase in demand of saltpeter its production increased in the 17th century as per the military needs in Europe.

Pelsaert, Bernier, Tavernier, Manucci, Bowrey and Alexander Hamilton had given some details regarding the product of saltpeter in the 17th century. Akbar monopolized it and had a godown at Ahmadabad to store several thousands of mounds.[120] In the reign of Jahangir Pelsaert described the process of obtaining saltpeter from the salt-earth.[121] The largest saltpeter centers were Gujarat, Bengal, Bihar, a number of regions of the present states of Uttar Pradesh, Andhra, Mysore, the district around Agra, and so on.[122] According to Tavernier the Coromandel Coast, Gujarat, Patna, Agra regions and the Konkan ports together with Bihar Province were important centres for this product. The Dutch had established a depot at Chapra, which were 14 leagues above Patna. Saltpetre was first refined there and then it was sent by river to Hugli. A *maund* of saltpetre was sold at 7 *mahmudis*.[123] But Manucci states that "on account of the black fat earth saltpetre was largely obtained at Ajmere."[124] However, they don't mention its export.

In the initial stages the trade in this commodity could not make much headway

---

[116] *Ibid.*
[117] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp.74-75.
[118] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 227.
[119] Chickerov, A. I., *Economic Development in the 16th-18th Centuries*, Moscow, 1971, p. 49.
[120] *Ain. op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 239.
[121] Pelsaert. *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[122] Chickerov, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
[123] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 10.
[124] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 425.

with the result that between 1630 and 1650 the export was limited to 200 and 300 tons. However, by 1653 it became the monopoly of the English company which fixed an annual quantity at 800 tons. Besides this, the Dutch in the year 1661 shipped as large a quantity as 1480 tons (weight). The value of exported saltpeter has been estimated at Rs. 1, 00, 000 by Moreland.[125]

Carpets were used for covering the floor of the houses of the upper classes. Fine carpets were used for the purpose of sitting at Malabar.[126] Carpets were also stitched in Bengal.[127] Though the references of carpet are found in the accounts of travellers who visited South India but the manufacture of high class carpets seems to date back from the time of Emperor Akbar. During his reign we find the mention of two varieties mainly Pile Stitch and Plain Stitch. Akbar encouraged carpet weaving extensively in Agra, Fatehpur Sikri and Lahore.[128]

The accounts of foreign travellers inform that the carpets of three varieties were produced in India while Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Lahore and Amritsar[129] specialized in woolen and cotton carpets, Ahmadabad, Surat, and Cambay concentrated mainly on silk carpets.[130] The wool carpets made such a tremendous progress in quality, texture and design that they compared very favorably with the superior carpets of Iran and Tehran.[131] A beautiful garden carpet preserved in Maharaja palace at Jaipur which well manufactured during the reign of Mirza Jai Singh almost as good as the imported Persian garden carpets of those days.[132] The manufactures of ordinary carpets were also very prevalent in the reigns of Agra, Fatehpur Sikri and Ahmadabad and in the State of Malwa.

The pottery was used as an important manufacture for every use in India as it was attached with the rural commodity-producing artisan.[133] Pottery making is an ancient art in India. A higher degree of excellence prevailed which is obvious from the finds of Mohanjodaro and Harappa.

In the sixteenth and the seventeenth century in India the earthen vessels were

---

[125] *From Akbar to Aurangzeb, op. cit.*, p. 122.
[126] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 9.
[127] Linschoten, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
[128] *Ain*, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 57.
[129] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
[130] Tavernier, *op. cit.*,Vol. II, p. 2.
[131] *Ain, op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 57. Abul Fazl mentions that carpets of such a variety and texture were produced under the instruction of the empire. *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 108.
[132] Darbari Neera, *Northern India under Aurangzeb, Social and Economic Condition*, Shalabh Publishing House, Meerut, 1998, p. 185
[133] Chickerov, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

commonly used by the general masses as compared to metal vessels because the metal was scarce and therefore costlier. But it never meant that the superior ware was not manufactured.

The advent of Muslim rule in India made a new development in the pottery industry and there are informations regarding the progress of pottery industry in Medieval India in contemporary Persian chronicles. The glazed pottery which was hitherto unknown to Indian public was a notable contribution of medieval times.[134]

There is paucity of references from the foreign travellers account on the manufacture of pottery for the period of study. Barbosa, the Portuguese traveller, mentions a potter caste called Kusawan of Malabar who were making pottery and bricks as their family business.[135] Patna, manufactured so fine quality of earthen pottery that sometimes it looked even thinner than a paper and lighter than the china potters. This article was of great use in Europe. Allahabad also manufactured pottery but it was not as fine as that of Patna.[136] However, there was import of Chinese porcelain of superior quality for use of the affluent section of society.[137]

The use of paper was discovered by the Arabs or rather the paper makers of Samarqand which is firmly established by the recent researches. In India, the introduction of paper making is obscure. However, it is established that paper making was practiced at Sialkot (now in Pakistan) in 1288. Nicolo Conti who visited South India in the early part of 15th century mentions the use of paper by the people of Cambay. Amir Khusrau mentions the use of *shami* (Syrian) paper in Delhi which suggests the inadequacy and low quality of paper production.

Early sixteenth century travellers in the South India noticed that all writing was done on palm leaves.[138] Pyrard who visited Malabar Coast in 1602, writes, "They write with iron bodkins upon palm leaves, which are yellow in colour and very thick."[139] As late as in 1625, Pietro Della Valle obtained a specimen manuscript which was written for him on palm leaves.[140] The Portuguese at Goa imported their supplies of paper partly from Europe, partly from China and partly from the Cambay ports.[141]

---

[134] Watt, *op. cit.*, p. 331.
[135] Barbosa, *op. cit.* Vol. II, 57.
[136] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 426, 428.
[137] According to Ain-i-Akbari, Akbar left Chinese porcelain at Agra alone valued at two and a half million of rupees.
[138] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 18.
[139] Laval, *op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 408.
[140] Della Valle, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 291. Also see, Fryer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 442.
[141] Laval, *op. cit.*, pp. 175, 211, 245.

During the Akbar's period the suba of Bihar was noted for the production of good paper.[142] Whereas, Peter Mundy who visited during the reign of Shahjahan says that the best paper was made at Shahzadpore near Allahabad in enormous quantity and from there it was sent to other parts.[143]

During the medieval period the building of indigenous ships has been described by various travellers in India. Marco Polo in the thirteenth, Ibn Batuta, in the fourteenth, Vasco Da Gama in the fifteenth and Varthema and Barbosa in the beginning of the sixteenth century has all described the existence of ship building in industry.

The effectiveness of ship-building activity is proved by the foreign travellers' account relating the size of the ships, the tonnage capacity and the composition of merchant's fleet. The Moors, according to Barbosa, in the days of their prosperity had built keeled ships which could carry 224 tons.[144] Some of their ships had also the capacity of carrying as large 600 tons. However, the ships at Calicut were made of 300 to 400 butts or 200 tons on an average.[145]

The ship-building received a great impetus during the reign of Emperor Akbar. It continued to develop and was speeded up as an art in the second half of the 17th century. Indian ships were superior to those of the western nation especially because the Indian ships were made of teak wood which withstand the effects of saline water. King of Spain used vessels in Eastern waters built in India.[146] Shivajee also liberally patronized the ship industry. Several docks were built, such as those in the harbours of Vijayanagara, Kolaba, Sindhvarga, Ratnagiri, Anjanvela, and so on where ships were built.[147]

The centres for ship-building industry were many during the medieval period. On the Malabar Coast, the centres were Calicut,[148] Cochin and Maldive Islands. Gujarat was another important centre which was famous for its maritime activity. During Akbar's reign the chief centres were Bengal, Kashmir and Thatta. Ships were built in Allahabad and Lahore also. Abul Fazl tells us that in the Circar of Thatta there

---

[142] Pant, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
[143] Peter Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 98.
[144] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 77.
[145] Vartema, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
[146] Laval, *op. cit.*, p. 182. Federici refers to the ship-building from the timder of coconut tree without the mixture of any other tree, Purchas, *op. cit.*, Vol. X, p. 91.
[147] Duff, James Grant, *History of Mahrattas*, First Published, 1863, rpt. 1990, Low Price Publications, Delhi, Vol. I, pp. 172.
[148] Varthema, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

were to be found 40, 000 vessels ready for here.[149]

In the second half of the 17th century ports like Bombay, Surat and Hugli which had a long tradition of ship-building, gradually flourished into very developed centres of ship-building.[150] Narsapore (45 miles north of Masulipatnam) abounded in timber which was used in the building and repairing of ships.[151] Madapollam was also a flourishing ship-building and manufacturing station.[152] The country was not only self-sufficient in the requirement but occasionally supplied to the English and the Dutch merchants.

The ship-building started deteriorating when the trading by sea had changed hands from the Indian to the foreign merchant. The adverse affects of the advent of the English and the Dutch on Indian Shipping was minimized by Moreland.[153] He thinks that it was the result of a policy of force exemplified in repeated acts of violent piracy.[154]

Trade and Commerce

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the trade and commerce of India flourished as the volume of trade and the variety of the articles of trade increased considerably. A revolution took place in the trade and commerce of India with the coming of Portuguese in 1498 A.D. Moreland remarks the sixteenth century as, 'a period of unstable equilibrium' which began with the political control over the oceanic commerce. The trade became their (Portuguese) state monopoly. The seventeenth century caused even more far-reaching revolution in commerce. The Portuguese were replaced by the Dutch and the English who changed the trend of India's trade with East Africa and Asia and established a new direct trade with new markets in Western Europe in certain articles (cotton, saltpeter and indigo). They firmly established on India's seacoasts from Sind to Bengal and also penetrated into Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. By the end of the century they established direct trade with Europe in Madras calicoes, Bihar saltpeter, Bengal silk and Bengal sugar. The costly "toy trade" of Europe came to be patronized by the rich.

---

[149] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 339.
[150] Sarkar, Jagdish Narayan, *op. cit.*, p. 218.
[151] Bowrey, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
[152] *Ibid*, pp. 100-101.
[153] Sarkar, Jagdish Narayan, *op. cit.*, p. 171.
[154] *Ibid.*

The articles of trade were generally same in both the centuries under study. India imported a few necessaries, some raw materials and luxuries. Among the exports including textile fabrics, common food articles, black pepper, indigo, raw silk, raw cotton, cotton goods, especially the coarser ones, were the most important and extensive. In the seventeenth century indigo became a 'prime commodity' in Indo-European trade, while Bihar saltpeter was found to be indispensable for the growing munitions industry in Western Europe, and Bengal now supplanted other countries in supplying raw silk (yarn) to Europe.

The demand for India's good in European countries exceeded her need for import as the imports included mainly the articles of luxury which were not consumed by the general masses.

The balance of trade was favourable towards India is also indicated well by the accounts of the foreign travellers when Sir Thomas Roe remarks, *'Europe bleedeth to enrich Asia'*.[155] William Hawkins recorded, *"India is rich in silver for all nations bring coin and carry away commodities for the same and this coin is buried in India and goeth not out"*.[156] Gemelli Careri writes in Aurangzebs period, *"all the gold and silver which circulates throughout the world at last centres here."*[157]

The foreign travellers who visited India during those two centuries were mainly interested in the trade and commerce of our country. Their accounts on trade and commerce are even more significant both qualitatively and quantitatively as compared to the Persian chronicles of the period. The travelogues of the period throw much light on the various aspects of trade and commerce such as on the articles of trade, transport and communication, commercial centers, internal trade, foreign trade, etc.

Foreign Trade

The foreign trade in India was mainly sea-borne in nature which may be grouped into two broad categories as (i)Ports on the Western sea-coast (ii)Ports on the Eastern sea-coast

These ports were again into regional groups. The western sea-coast was divided into five regional groups- (a) The Indus Delta or The Sindh group (b) The

---

[155] Roe, Thomas, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India, 1615-19*, ed. Sir William Foster, New and Revised edition, Oxford University Press, London, 1926, p. 486.

[156] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 112.

[157] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

Gujarat group (c)The Konkan group (d) The Kanarese group (e) The Malabar group. On the other hand, the eastern sea-coast was divided into four major groups- (a) The Coromandel Coast ports (b) The Gingelly coast (c) The Orissa ports (d) The Bengal ports.

Further for the convenience of the study the chief ports participating actively in the India's foreign trade may be divided according to their significance in the northern and the southern India. The chief sea-ports in the north were (a) The Indus Delta or Sindh group (b) The Gujarat group and(c) The Bengal ports. Whereas the chief sea-port groups in the south consisted (a) The Kanarese group (b) The Malabar group and (c) The Coromandel Coast ports.

The importance of the Indus Delta was due to the port Lahiri Bander which was internally connected by Thatta, Multan, and Lahore by the water routes whereas its export trade by sea was carried on with Arabia and Persia,[158] particularly with Ormuz. Towards the end of the sixteenth century it lost much of its importance with the fall of Ormuz.

The chief seaports under the Gujarat group were Cambay, Broach and Surat which traded with Arabia, Africa and indirectly with Europe in the west and with the Straits of Malacca in the east in trade items as textiles, metals, spices and luxury goods. In spite of being under Mughal control, their sea-borne trade was dominated by the Portuguese ho had owned two ports, Daman and Diu, at the southern point of the Gujarat group and fortified them thus bottling up the shipping at Cambay, Broach and Surat.

As the water in the Cambay Gulf was shallow, large trading vessels could enter it only at great peril[159], and therefore the merchandise was generally unloaded at Diu or Ghoga which was under the Portuguese hold, and was then carried to the ports in the Gulf through shallow water by flotillas of small vessels[160] called *tauri* or *ghurab*. The ships laden with cargoes from Cambay used to sail to distant places such as Mombasa and Zanzibar on the African coast as well as to the Persian Gulf. It was visited by many vessels from different foreign countries.[161] Ships from Cambay also

---

[158] *India at the Death of Akbar, op. cit.*, p. 204.

[159] Barbosa, *op. cit.* Vol I, p. 138, Laet, De, *The Empire of the Great Mogol*, Tr. J.S. Hoyland & S.N. Banerjee (annotated), Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, New Delhi, First published, 1928, Second edition, 1974, p. 19.

[160] *India at the Death of Akbar, op. cit.*, p. 205.

[161] *English Factories, op. cit.*, Vol. 1(1618-21), p. 31.

sailed to Bantam and Malacca touching *en route* Chaul, Goa and the Bengal coast.[162]

The exports of Cambay included silk textiles, quilts, carpets, indigo, paper, leather goods, opium, ginger, sugar, drugs, iron, hides, myrobolans, asafoetida and precious stones.[163] The imports comprised velvets, sandalwood, vermillion, Damisqui, rose water, China silk, Ethiopian slaves, gold, silver, copper, and horses.[164] Akbar levied 2½% customs duty on these goods[165] and subsequently it was raised to 3½%.

Surat, another important seaport of the Gujarat group, assumed great importance as an emporium towards the end of the sixteenth century. It was a walled town with an impregnable fort built within the wall. The wall had seven gates.[166] The Surat harbour was located at a distance of three miles up the Tapi River,[167] which was navigable for vessels weighing up to 50 tons.[168]

One of the specialties of this port was that every year the *Haj* pilgrims sailed from Surat to Mecca carrying much merchandise with them, and while coming back brought in exchange silver, gold, treasure and other commodities. Thus the voyage of the *Haj* pilgrims achieved the twin purposes of pilgrimage and commerce.[169] Early in the seventeenth century the Dutch and the English trading companies were firmly entrenched in the Surat port. These companies shipped Indian goods abroad and unloaded foreign goods at Surat whench they were sent to their branches inland, where they were disposed of by selling to Indian merchants and customers. Surat became a large store-house for these companies which stored the goods in their factories before they were sent either to foreign countries or to their branch offices inland for further distribution. Surat also served as an exchange market for the goods of Hindustan and South India. Custom duties were levied on the imports and exports at various rates at different times, and a separate customs officer was appointed for looking after the matters relating to transit dues, as distinct from the *Kotwal* of Governor of Gujarat.[170]

In the Bengal group there were principally three ports, Satgaon, Hugli, and

---

[162] Purchas, *op. cit.*, Vol. X, p. 208

[163] *Ibid* p. 206, Barbosa, *op. cit.* Vol.I, p. 129,141, Laval, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 245, *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 113, Jourdain, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-74.

[164] *Ain, op. cit.* Vol.I, p. 98-99, *English Factories, op. cit.*, Vol. 1(1618-21), pp. 55, 57, Varthema, *op. cit.*, p. 37; Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 19, Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

[165] *Ibid.* Vol. I, 292.

[166] Peter Mundy, *op. cit.*, II, p. 29.

[167] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 134.

[168] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

[169] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 300.

[170] *Ibid.* p. 71, Jourdain, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

Sripur. Barbosa speaks of a seaport called Bengala[171] on the Bengal sea-coast, and it is generally identified with Satgaon situated up the river Hugli. Large ships could not be anchored here from the sixteenth century necessitating ships to be anchored at Betor, and the unloaded goods to be carried to Satgaon in flotillas of small boats. Satgaon was visited by mercantile ships from China, Arabia, Armenia and Persia.[172] From Satgaon were exported cotton and silk stuffs, ginger, myrabolans, long pepper, lemons and the like.[173]

Hugli also located on the bank of the Ganges, was at a distance of half a *kos* or one mile from Satgaon.[174] Hugli was in the beginning dominated and controlled by the Portuguese, who were granted this port by the Mughal emperor. The ships laden with merchandise comprising silks, carpets of Jaunpur, quilts, tent materials, *amertees*, sugar, rice, ghee, indigo, long pepper and other articles,[175] bound for the western countries such as Persia and Arabia and the eastern countries like Malacca and China, used to sail from Hugli. The imports included costly textile stuffs such as velvets, brocades, damasks and satins, metals like copper and tin, precious stones like jewels and pearls, spices like cloves, nutmeg and mace, piece of furniture, sandalwood and other sundry goods.[176] From Hugli the goods were sent up overland to Hindustan and South India.

The ports of the Kanarese group extended from Goa in the north to Mt. Delli in the south, and included such important harbours as Mirjan, Honnavar, Bhatkal, Barkur, Basrur, Mangalore and Kumbla.

According to Barbosa this harbour (Goa) was exceedingly good, and hence it had a flourishing trade. The rulers received much revenue from the trade of Goa. The horses of good breed constituted a very important item of the import trade Vijayanagara, and they were imported through Goa. Every year many ships laden with horses came to Goa from Ormuz and these were purchased by the merchants of Vijayanagara and the Deccan. In return the Ormuz ships carried from Goa cargoes of rice in large quantities, sugar, iron, pepper, ginger, various kinds of spices and drugs. Goa was also visited by ships laden with merchandise from Mecca and Aden. Its coastal trade was carried on by ships coming from Malabar, Chaul, Dabhol and

---

[171] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 135.
[172] Varthema, *op. cit.*, p. 79. Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p.145.
[173] *Ibid.*
[174] *English Factories*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1(1618-21), p. 214, *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p.113.
[175] *Ibid.* p. 195
[176] *Ibid*, 195, 214

Cambay.[177]

Goa, though the starting point of the Kanarese group, lay outside it. The first seaport of this group was Mirjan situated on the bank of the river of the same name. The Malabar vessels called Zambuquos brought here cocoanuts, coconut oil and jaggery in large quantities and carried away in return black coarse rice. Honnavar traded with Malabar in black rice, cocoanuts, coconut oil, palm-sugar and palm-wine.

Bhatkal was a seaport of considerable importance. *"It was a very noble city of India.....walled and very beautiful and almost a mile distant from the sea. Its king is subject to the king of Narasinga."*[178] It was a large town of very great trade in merchandise, inhabited by many Moors and Gentiles, who were a commercial people. Its principal exports to Ormuz consisted of white rice, powdered sugar and iron. Spices were carried by the ships of Moors bound for Mecca. The Malabaris purchased from here loads of iron and sugar. The Ormuz ships brought to Bhatkal every year large numbers of horses and pearls. The Malabaris sold here palm-sugar, cocoanuts, coconut oil, palm-wine, large quantities of pepper and drugs. The other imports consisted of copper used of coinage, for making cooking pots and other utensils, quicksilver, vermillion dye, coral, alum and ivory.[179] But in the times of Alexander Hamilton, the former glory and grandeur of this port had vanished and its importance was considerably diminished. The remains in the city of Bhatkal, says Alexander Hamilton, showed that it must have been a large and flourishing city formerly. When the traveller visited it there was nothing left of its former splendor, except ten or eleven small temples covered with copper and stone. The country yielded a good deal of pepper. The English Company had built their factory there.[180]

The port of Honnavar was a notable town since a very long time. Honnavar literally means "a golden village". The River on which it stood was the Sarasvati. Pietro Della Valle, describing the port in 1629 A.D. Writes, *"Onar is a small place by the sea-side, but a good port of indifferent capacity, which is formed by two arms of rivers which running one Southward and the other Northward meet at the Fortress, and are discharged with one mouth into the Sea."*[181]

---

[177] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 174-175, 178.
[178] Varthema, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
[179] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 188-91.
[180] Hamilton, Alexander, *The New Account of the East Indies, Being the Observations and Remarks of Captain Alexander Hamilton, 1688-1723*, ed. Sir William Foster, London, 1739, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1995,Vol. I, p. 158.
[181] Della Valle, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 202.

Another city of considerable commercial importance in the coastland was Basrur, which, standing as it did on the old embouchure of the Kundapur River in olden days had become a centre of traffic from where men traded with distant lands like Arabia and Egypt. Husked and cleaned good rice was exported in large quantities from Barkur and Basrur to Malabar, Ormuz, Aden, Xaer, Cannanore and Calicut, and the imports consisted of copper, coconuts and molasses.

Mangalore was the greatest mart for trade in all the Kanara dominions though it had lost much of its importance towards the close of the 17th century. The chief exports of Mangalore to Aden and Malabar were black rice, which was *"better and more wholesome than the white,"* and pepper. From Kumbla likewise was exported black rice to the Maldive Islands and Malabar. In return it got coir made out of the husks of coconut from the Maldive Islands. In general it may be said that the Kanarese group of seaports traded with Malabar, Maldive Islands, Arabia, Persia, Aden, Ormuz and Mecca, in such commodities as rice, pepper, coconut oil, coir, jaggery, sugar, iron, copper, horses and pearl.

The Malabar group consisted of a greater number of ports, as many as twenty-five, lying between Mt. Delli in the north and Cape Comorin in the south. The volume of trade from these ports also was more than that from the Kanarese ports. The Malabar group, whose chief port was Cochin, had trade relations with six foreign markets located in Africa, Europe, Arabia, Persia, Ceylon and South-east Asia. The chief trading centres on the east African coast were Sofala, Mozambique, Mombasa and Magadoxo. The exports from Malabar to these trade centres were textiles, spices, drugs and provisions. In return these African ports shipped to Malabar gold "which was the real foundation of the trade with Sofala and Mozambique", ivory, amber, ebony and slaves.

To Persia, whose chief seaport was Ormuz came ships from Malabar laden with cotton fabrics, sugar, pepper and other spices. Malabar received from these markets coined silver, horses, pearls and silk fabrics. The markets in South-east Asia for Indian foreign trade were Malacca, Java, Sumatra, Moluccas, Banda, Borneo and Celebes. The Indian exports were mainly the textiles and some other goods. In the list of imports spices came first, followed by gold, China goods, drugs and perfumes. From Malacca were imported porcelain goods, lacquered ware, camphor and perfumes. Pepper and gold came from Java and Sumatra. Gold was also available from Borneo and Celebes. Cloves were furnished by the Moluccas, and mace and

nutmegs by Banda.[182]

The chief seaports of the Malabar group were Cannanore, Dharmapattanam, Calicut, Cochin, Kayankolam, and Quilon. Cannanore or Kannanur or simply Kannur was a port of considerable importance. Its king bore the title of Kolattiri. The rich merchants of this port possessed their own ships in which they traded with Dabhol, Chaul, Goa, Cambay, the Coromandel Coast, Ceylon, the Maldive Islands, Banda and Ormuz.[183] It was visited by as many as 200 ships every year. Horses were imported from Persia.[184] The merchants of Dharmapattanam likewise were very rich and owned many ships.[185]

The ruler of the kingdom of Calicut was known as Zamorin. The merchants of Calicut built in the city "keeled ships of a thousand and a thousand and two hundred bahares burden." Every year they exported to the Red Sea, Aden, Mecca and Jidda in ten or fifteen of their ships pepper, ginger, cinnamon, cardamoms, myrobolans, tamarinds, canafistula, different kinds of precious stones, seed pearls, musk, ambergris, rhubarb, aloes-wood, cotton stuffs, and porcelains. The ships of Calicut brought from Jidda copper, quicksilver, vermillion, coral, saffron, coloured velvets, rosewater, knives, coloured camlets, gold, silver and many other goods. This trade, says Barbosa, made the merchants very wealthy. The foreign merchants accompanied these ships on their return voyage to India, and settled here only engaged chiefly in shipbuilding and commerce.

The port of Cochin traded in *arecanuts, cocos, pepper, jaggery, and palm-sugar* with the Coromandel Coast, Dabhol, Chaul and Cambay. In this country grew ginger, cardamoms, *myrabolans, canafistula, zerumba, zerodary* and wild cinnamon. The Portuguese had a fine fortress at Cochin where ships were built and repaired. The ships built were generally of the type of galleys and caravels. Large quantities of pepper grown here, and many other spices and drugs reaching here from Malacca were made up into cargoes sent in ships to Portugal every year.[186]

Quilon, the southern-most seaport of importance in the Malabar group, had early developed a good trade with the East, especially with China. It had become an entrepot for the Chinese goods. The Chinese merchants carrying goods for the western

---

[182] *India at the Death of Akbar, op. cit.*, pp. 208-10.
[183] Barbosa, *op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 81.
[184] Varthema, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-25.
[185] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 82.
[186] *Ibid.* Vol II, 92-93.

markets used to halt at Quilon. Cochin also shipped its own goods to Aden.[187] The Moors and Hindus of this place were great traders and had their own trading vessels. They exported a variety of goods to Ceylon, the Coromandel Coast, Bengala, Malacca, Sumatra and Pegu, but not to Cambay. Pepper was a chief article of trade here, of which Quilon had large quantities.

The chief ports of Choromandel group consisted Kayal, Negapatam,Mailapur, Pulicat and Masulipatam. The principal foreign markets for the trade of this group were Ceylon, Pegu, Malacca, Sumatra, and China. Kayal was famous for its pearls. The merchants of this place and of the Choromandel Coast were known as Chattis or Settis who were men of high standing and traded in sea-pearls and other precious stones. Kayal was visited by trading ships coming from Malabar and Bengala. Kayal at this time was not subject to Vijayanagar. Mailapur seems to have been a port of some importance in early medieval times.

Pulicat, the northernmost port in this group, was certainly a flourishing emporium. Not only by sea, but also by land came many traders to the market of Pulicat. From Pegu were exported to Pulicat large quantities of rubies, spinels and musk. And they were quite cheap here. Pulicat produced abundance of printed cotton stuffs, which were exported to Malacca, Pegu, Sumatra, Malabar and Gujarat. It imported from Cambay, Malabar and Mecca copper, quicksilver, vermillion, Cambay wares, dyes and grain, Mecca velvets and rosewater.[188]

Masulipatam was the important port from which ships sailed to the coasts of Bengal, Arakan, Pegu and Tenasserim, laden with all sorts of cotton cloths, glass, iron, cotton yarn, both red and white; tobacco and cowries, used as money in Bengal and Arakan, and also some spices and sandalwood. Linschoten has reffered to the cotton fabrics of Negapatam, San Thome and Masulipatam in 1595. The Shah of Golconda agreed to supply annually several thousand pieces of red cotton stuffs to the Shah of Persia for the latter's army by sea and controlled the trade. Hence the Dutch found difficulty in procuring red cotton cloth through the middlemen at Petapoly (1607-08). Subsequently in the 17th century Masulipatam had to face competition from the English in Madras and the Armenians in San Thome. But it possessed unquestioned importance as a port of call for all Indian ships moving in and out of Bengal.

---

[187] Polo, Marco, *the Travels of Marco Polo, (The Venetian)*, ed Komroff Manuel, Garden City Publishing Co. Inc. New York, 1926, p. 306.

[188] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 97, 123, 125, 130-32.

Internal Trade

The internal trade in India was equally brisk as compared to the foreign trade of the time which is amply evidenced by the foreign travellers. Internal trade played the role to make available the requirements of the peoples within a region also that were produced or found in other regions owing to the different climatic conditions and natural resources found in different parts of the country. Thus internal trade was of two types (i) Intra-local trade and (ii) Inter-regional trade.

Intra-local Trade

The Intra-local trade when held at the lower level at villages which were self-sufficient and the markets things of day-to-day consumption such as salt, edible oil, ghee, spices, vegetables, thread, coarse cloth, agricultural implements and ordinary utensils were generally available, and were exchanged according to the requirements of the people known as barter system. Thus, the cereals and other grains were exchanged for the non-perishable articles of daily use of farmers from the village Banian in the weekly market or sometimes more market days in a week. "Even in the smallest villages, rice, flour, butter, milk, beans and other vegetables, sugar and other sweetmeats, dry and liquid can be procured in abundance."[189] The village markets were wholesale markets (*mandis*) unlike the bazars which were generally retail markets.[190]

The intra-local trade in towns such as Agra, Delhi, Patna, Surat, Goa and Hugli were in prevalence. All these towns had several markets or bazaars, besides the one which was chief or great *baazar*. In *baazar* at Surat, it was difficult to pass through the multitude of Bannias and other Merchants that expose their good.[191] Fryer observes, *"Being more like pedlars stalls, we crossed several bazzars, which yielded sustenance to many mouths." The producers like the textile weavers marketed their own products.*[192] The chief feature of intra-local trade in towns was availability of a particular product in a particular centre.

---

[189] Tavernier, *op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 36.

[190] Master, Streynsham, *the Diaries of Streynsham Master, (1675-1680)*, ed., R.C. Temple, London, 1909, 1911, Vol. I, p. 325.

[191] Ovington, John, *A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689 by J. Ovington*, ed., H.G. Rawlinson, Oxford University Press, London, 1929, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, rpt., 1994, p. 130.

[192] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 96-97.

Inter-local trade

The inter-regional requirements of articles were fulfilled by this type. The over production or the under production of certain articles in one region was the major factor responsible for inter-regional trade. Kashmir was the manufacturer of prominent luxury goods which were in use in every part of the India.[193] The iron from Gwalior mines was used to produce 'numerous articles' which were sent to the principal cities of the Mughal Empire.[194] Likewise the abundance of tobacco at Burhanpur was exported to other parts in India.[195] The main industrial and commercial centres were Delhi, Lahore, Punjab, Agra, Ajmer, Gujarat, Banaras, Patna, Bengal, Orissa and Kashmir.

Delhi being situated on the bank of river Jamuna was well connected through riverd also. The rich market of Delhi displays the fine cloth, silk, brocade, butter, piles of baskets filled with grains, rich fruit shops supplied with dry fruits from Persia, Balkh, Bokhara and Samarkand.[196]

Lahore was described as, *"second to none either in Asia or in Europe"*[197] in the days of its glory. "Lahore and Multan emerged as important bustling centres of trade and commerce".[198] The traders of India went to Kabul and Multan to buy these articles of trade.[199]

Punjab was an important centre of inland import and export of various goods. The articles of exports included cotton, silk, woollen fabrics, beads, borax, lac, sealing wax etc.

Agra being the capital of the Mughals during this period was the most developed and flourishing trade centre of Northern India. There was a brisk trade on and along the Ganges and Jamuna up to Agra. Agra imported raw silk and sugar from Bengal and Patna and exported provisions which included rice, wheat and ghee from eastern provinces without which it was said, it could not have fed itself.[200] Agra exported salt, cotton and opium to Bengal and sugar, wheat and Bengal silk to Gujarat.[201]

---

[193] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 492.
[194] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 70.
[195] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 19-20.
[196] Bernier, *op. cit.*, pp. 248-249, 281-282.
[197] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-60.
[198] *India at the Death of Akbar, op. cit.*, p. 219.
[199] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 426.
[200] *Ain op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 53.
[201] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 2.

Ajmer produced salt and saltpeter as the chief articles of trade. "*The saltpeter was carried to the seaport town and especially to Surat where the Europeans and others bought it*".[202]

Gujarat was famous for its production of fine cloth. The varieties included the silver, gold and flowered silk.[203] The silk clothes manufactured in Gujarat were sold all over India.[204] It imported silk from Bengal. Other than cloth Gujarat imported "*wheat and other food grains from Malwa and Ajmer and rice from Dakhin. Rice was also brought by sea from Malabar*". The exports of Gujarat included cotton, opium to Kerala, tobacco to Thatta.[205] Ahmadabad occupied an important place in the commercial field of India from the early seventeenth century. The vast hinterland of Ahmadabad provided good quantity of calicoes and other goods to the different parts of Northern India. Baroach and Surat were its main trading centres. "*The commodities that are most traded in at Ahmadabad are satin, velvets, taffetas and tapestries with gold, silk and woolen gowns, cotton clothes are sold there also; but they come from Lahore and Delhy; they export from thence great quantities of Indigo, dried and preserved ginger, sugar, cumin, lac, mirabolams, tamarind, opium, saltpeter and honey*".[206]

The city of Banaras was famous for its gold and silver work which was not only consumed by the local population, but was an article of Indian export. It had trade links with towns like Agra, Delhi, Patna and Bengal.

Patna was also an important centre of trade. It was quite popular for the fine cotton and silk cloth which piled the market shops. Quite a considerable quantity of saltpeter was produced here which was stored in Bengal. Bottles were also made and cups of clay sometimes finer than glass and even lighter than paper were carried all over the world.[207]

Bengal topped the list of inter-regional imports and exports in Northern India. It may be considered as the richest province from the point of view of trade. Bengal traded through its "important trade routes, with Coromandel and the Malabar coasts, Konkan and Gujarat. It had trade links with Agra, Banaras, Punjab, Lahore and other

---

[202] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
[203] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 425.
[204] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 2.
[205] *English Factories*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 12(1665-67), p. 101.
[206] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
[207] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 84.

towns in Hindustan".[208] Sugar was manufactured in abundance. Cotton and especially silk cloth manufactured in Bengal was of world fame. It was also *"a principal emporium of saltpeter, a prodigious quantity was imported from Patna, carried down the Ganges. It is from Bengal that the best gul-lac, opium, wax, civet, long pepper and various drugs are obtained and butter is in such a plenty, that although it be a bulky article of export, yet it is sent by sea to numerous places"*.[209] It seems that Bengal had sufficient articles of export within India. Its richness in cultivation and favorable climate with huge quantity of silk-cloth production made it famous all over the world. Rice and salt were other important articles of inter-regional trade of Bengal.

Bengal not only sent its articles of trade to different parts of India, it also *"imported goods from various parts of India; ships arrived from the Coromandel coast loaded with copper, zinc, tin, tobacco, spices and the famous chintz of Masulipatam, from Kashmir they brought wool, from the North-west province salt, opium, tin, carpets and other goods; from the Malabar coast pepper and other things"*.[210]

Dacca was the capital and the largest town of Bengal province. The muslin manufactured at Dacca was sometimes so thin and fine that many yards of it could pass through a ring. Dacca had its trade relations with Patna, Benaras, Delhi and Agra and other parts of Northern India. Its main trading centres were Hariharpur and Balasore. Other centres of Bengal where considerable trade was carried on were, Sonargaon, Chittagon, Hoogly, Kasimbazar and Murshidabad. All these centres were mainly famous for the fine white and silken cloth production. Besides cloth, foodstuffs like rice and sugar were also important articles of export there.

Orissa had also developed inter-regional trade with other parts of Northern India. Its main production was fine cloth. Orissa had inland trade relations with Chromandel and Malabar Coast.[211] Both Hindu and Muslim merchants of Orissa had a dominant role in the trade activities. They traded with rice, silk and ivory also.

Kashmir had enough of wool and wooden goods to meet the demands of different parts of India.

In South India also the internal trade was going in between Cambay, Bhatkal, Mangalore, Malabar, Cochin, Kayal, Pulicat, Motupalli and Masulipatam. Rice,

---

[208] Chicherov, *op. cit.*, p. 105-106.
[209] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 440.
[210] Chicherov, *op. cit.*, p. 106.
[211] *Ibid.* p. 105-06

coconuts, jaggery and other commodities went from Malabar to Cambay and Surat, from where cotton and silk stuffs, etc. were brought to the Malabar Coast. Malabar also sent its products to Kayal, Negapatam, Pulicat, Motupalli and Masulipatam round Cape Comorin. In return Kayal despatched seed-pearls, Pulicat textiles, Motupalli and Masulipatam diamonds and precious stones to Malabar, Goa, Surat and Cambay and also to the Bengal Coast.

Transport System

Transport and communication transforms the organization in industry, creates great cities and raises the standard of living, promotes culture and unites politically. Thus, the significance of transport and communication is obvious in the overall development of any socio-economic and cultural life. The transport and communication system in India during the sixteenth and the seventeenth century was not as advanced as it is today. There were no metalled roads.[212] Even the insecurity on routes are highlighted by the sources on and off more especially by the foreign travellers. Sometimes bad arrangements at *serais* and even non-availability of *serais* were the common grievances of the travellers. In spite of these it is generally known that the routes and transports were adequate for the need of people and administration of the country.

The transportation system was similar in North and South India. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of evidences in the contemporary sources regarding this topic for South India. The foreign travellers such as Barbosa, Paes, Pietro Della Valle gives some stray pieces of information while describing the routes of their journey and notable places on their way. The transportation system under the Great Mughals finds much mention in the travelogues of the period based on the first hand experiences of the period.

The transportation was performed by two ways i.e., (a) land transport and (b) water transport. Land transport was made by different land routes available. These routes formed the artilleries of the empire connecting one region with the other enhancing transportation and communication.

---

[212] Pant, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

Land Transport

The most significant route followed during the reign of Akbar was from Surat-Burhanpur-Gwalior-Aholpur-Agra-Delhi-Lahore-Kabul-China-(Lahore-Multan-Kandhar-Persia).[213] Another route followed from Surat to Agra during the period was Surat-Broach-Baroda-Ahmadabad-Ahmadabad-Roha-Bagra-Merta-Ajmer-Bayana-Fatehpur Sikri-Agra.[214] Agra was connected to Bengal via Benaras and Patna in the manner, Agra-Etawah-Allahabad-Benaras-Mughal Serai-Patna-Bengal. This route was followed by Ralph Fitch for reaching Agra.[215] Agra was considered the heart of the empire.[216]

During the reign of Jahangir the route followed for Agra to Surat and vice-versa was as follows-Surat-Burhanpur-Dholpur-Agra and Agra-Fatehpur Sikri-Sikandrabad-Hindaun-Chandangaon-Ahmadabad.[217] De Laet had described the route from Agra to Jaunpur and also from Agra to Ajmer.[218] The above routes were also testified later by other travellers of the time like Roe, Jourdain, Pelsaert, Mundy, Tavernier and some others.

During the reign of Shahjahan Peter Mundy had even recorded the distance between Agra to Surat as 414 *kos*.[219] Tavernier had given the most elaborate and significant account regarding the routes followed scattered in his account.[220] The routes in Tavernier's account cover almost the whole range of North and South India and form the basis of many scholarly modern works. However, with some limitations Tavernier's account on the routes followed remains the most outstanding contribution on the subject. The routes from Aurangabad to Hyderabad, Burhanpur to Hyderabad and Surat to Aurangabad have been referred by Thevenot.[221] Abbe Carre describes the routes from Bijapur to Hyderabad, Chaul to Goa and Madras to Hyderabad.[222] Careri and Master refer to the routes from Goa to Galgala and Madras to Masulipatnam via Nizampattam.[223]

---

[213] *Ibid.* p. 53.
[214] *Ibid.*
[215] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 26.
[216] *Ibid.* p. 100.
[217] *Ibid.* p. 123.
[218] De Laet, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-67.
[219] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 272 (414 kos was equivalent to 598 ¼ English miles approx.).
[220] Tavernier, Vol. I, pp. 45-47, 58-59, 65, 69, 72, 74, 78, 85, 93, 96, 120, 139, 141-42, 146, 208, 214,217, 227, 236, 240.
[221] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-03, 108-10, 150-51.
[222] Abbe Carre, *op. cit.*, Vol I, pp. 187-207, 221-70, 317-26, Vol. II, pp. 77, 353.
[223] Careri, G.F. Gemelli, *A Voyage Round the World by Dr. John Francis Gemelli Careri, Part IIIrd*, ed.,

At Vijayanagar in South India there was a road to Goa via Bankapur. There was a land route from Goa–Bhatkal–Honnavar–Bankapur–Banavasi-Ranebennur–Hospet-Vijayanagara.[224] There is no clear picture regarding the highways in the South.

Security on the routes was the much talked issue by most of the travellers of the time especially those who visited North India i.e., the Mughal Empire. Many contemporary sources show that many routes were infested with gangs of thieves and robbers. In the reign of Akbar, Father Monserrate came across a large number of thieves on his journey from Surat to Agra.[225] Ralph Fitch recorded the presence of bandits in the region of Patna.[226] Abul Fazl also mentions that many routes in the Deccan were unsafe. In the reign of Jahangir, William Hawkins observed that "the country is so full of outlawes and theeves that almost a man cannot stirre out of doores throughout all his dominions without great forces".[227] William Finch in his journey from Agra to Ahmadabad found the route infested with thieves at several places such as at Bhadwar, Sunenarra (Sunera), Sipri etc.[228] On the way he came across Gracias near Sunenarra in Malwa and Koli's near Ahmedabad who were "thievish people".[229] He concluded his observation in this way "from Geloure to this citie is all a sandy woody countrey, full of theevish beastly men and of mankind...."[230] He found the way between Surat and Cambay "theevish" also.[231] Finch also heard the news of sacking of Kabul by the Potan robbers.[232] Withington himself was robbed on several occasions. They even took away his cloths and he had to beg for food.[233]

Peter Mundy who visited India during 1628-34 presents a picture of Indian routes infested by robbers and rebels. In coming from Agra to Surat in 1633 he records several incidents of robberies and illegal exactions. Near Sironj he records a place where the Dutch Caphila was assaulted by bandits.[234] Mandelslo observed that due to the presence of *'Rasboote'*, the road between Ahmadabad and Cambay had

---

Surendranath Sen, Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri, The National Archives of India, Qweensway, New Delhi, 1949, pp. 207-09; Streynsham Master, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 125-38.

[224] *A Forgotten Empire*, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

[225] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[226] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[227] *Ibid.* pp. 113-114.

[228] *Ibid.* pp. 136-137, 144.

[229] *Ibid.* pp. 142-143, 173.

[230] *Ibid.* p. 174.

[231] *Ibid.*

[232] *Ibid.* p. 167.

[233] *Ibid.* pp. 211-216.

[234] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 265.

become very dangerous.[235] He met a caravan from whom the highwaymen had extorted one hundred rupees[236] and again Mandelslo encountered a party of Rajput robbers near Anklessor.[237] An English caravan from Lucknow was robbed at Jettenore, where three carts was looted, causing a loss of atleast 5000 rupees.[238] Thevenot who visited India during 1666-67 informs us that the Gracias (girasyas) inhabiting the villages from Cambay to Broach, make their living by robbery.[239] The "*Thugs*" in the region of Delhi are "the Cunningest Robbers in the world".[240] Hamilton encountered Baluchi and Makran robbers in the regions of Sindh.[241]

Another type of problem that travellers faced on the route was the illegal exactions that the *jagirdars* and the *zamindars* often realized from them. Aurangzeb himself was so hurt by the collection of *rahdari* that he said "*this is not rahdari but rahzani (highway robbery)*".[242]

Faced with such insecurity, merchants had to make different arrangements for their protection. Often they would take guards at their own cost. William Hawkins, in 1608, going from Surat to Agra took 'Pattan' (Pathan) soldiers.[243] Mundy hired horsemen and footmen at various places during his journey from Agra to Ahmadabad.[244] Mandelslo during his journey from Surat to Ahmadabad, met an English caravan consisting of 12 English armed soldiers and as many Indians for conducting the caravan in safety in view of the threat from the Rajput highwaymen who frequented the country and lived as robbers.[245] Hamilton records, how with the help of 'thirteen best firemen' he forced the Baloch and the Makran robbers to retreat, during his journey from Larribandar to Thatta.[246]

Another arrangement for security on the route was to undertake journey in a large *caphila* or caravan. Withington records that on the way from Surat to Cambay at a place Barengeo (Bareja) the *caphila* of Cambay met and kept company for fear of

---

[235] Mandelslo, John Albert De, *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India (1638-1639)*, ed. M.S. Commissariat, Oxford University Press, London, 1931, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1995, p. 30.
[236] *Ibid.* p. 35.
[237] *Ibid.* p. 46.
[238] *English Factories*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 8(1646-50), p. 302.
[239] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21.
[240] *Ibid.* pp. 58.
[241] Hamilton, *op. cit.*, Vol I, pp. 116-118.
[242] Aurangzebe, Alamgir, *Ruqat-i-Alamgiri* or *Letters of Aurangzebe*, English Tr. Jamshid H. Bilimoria, B.A., Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, 2009, L II, p. 52.
[243] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
[244] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 255-56, 296.
[245] Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.
[246] Hamilton, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 114-118.

the theeves.[247] Della Valle travelled from Cambay to Ahmadabad with a *qafila* which consisted of above a hundred coaches, besides footmen and horsemen and great laden wagons.[248] Thomas Roe met with 10, 000 bullocks in one troop laden with corn. Mundy met a *qafila* of 800 camels near Sironj. The Banjara caravan had upto 20, 000 pack oxen.[249] Thomas Roe met with 10, 000 bullocks in one troop laden with corn.[250] The size apparently inhibited attacks.

The system of *hundi* (bill) and *bima* (insurance) was an important private arrangement in Mughal India.[251] Suraj Rai describes the *hundi* enthusiastically, regarding it as one of the wonders of India. Describing it he says. "if due to danger on the routes any person cannot convey the sums of money to a near or distant place, the *Sarraf* take it from him and give him a piece of paper written in *Hindvi* characters without a seal or envelope addressed to their agents (*Gumashta-na*) who have their shops in various towns and place throughout these lands, and this paper in the language of this country is known as '*hundi*'. The *gumashtas* of these honest dealers pay out money in accordance with that document without any argument or objection". He further informs us that the *hindvi* piece of paper was transferable.[252] Abul Fazl has also described this system for the transition of money. This institution was so efficient that even the Imperial revenue was transmitted through it. Mandelslo make special reference of the facility with which bills of exchange could be secured at Ahmadabad by merchants from the Banya shoroffs, who had their correspondents in all parts of Asia and also as far as Constantinople in Europe.[253] As to *bima* were two types of insurance. One type of insurance only covered the risk of loss on the way, and in the other type the insurer not only took the custody of the goods but also arranged for their safe conveyance. Mundy mentions the professional carters '*adowyaes*' who took so much money on hiring that they could pay the transit dues etc. on their own risk for the safe conveyance of the goods.[254]

The Mughal emperors were not indifferent to state of security and they adopted several measures to insure the peace and security on the routes. They held

---

[247] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 206.
[248] Della Valle, *op.* cit., Vol. I, p. 93.
[249] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 9.
[250] Roe, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
[251] Habib, Irfan, "*The System of Bills Exchange (Hundi) in the Mughal Empire*", PIHC, 33rd Session, ed. Satish Chandra, Muzaffarpur, 1972. pp. 290-301.
[252] Bhandari, Sujan Rai, *Khulasatut Twarikh*, ed. Zafar Hasan, Delhi, 1918, pp. 25.
[253] Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.
[254] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 278, 291.

responsible all the officers such as *subahdar, faujdar, kotwal, thanadar, jagirdars*, etc. for all occurrences of disorder in their jurisdiction. If a case of robbery or theft was reported and the offenders were not traced, it was the responsibility of the officers to make up the loss of the victim.[255] Most of the contemporary travellers and historians have recorded several incidences of punishment given to the outlaws.[256]

The system of *serais* or walled lodgings and store houses designed for the travelers was one of the important arrangements for the safety on routes throughout the Mughal Empire.[257] Some of these were like fortified palaces with bastions and strong gates. Most of them were built of stone or of brick and some of them even of mud.[258] Some of them were in square like cloister in monastry and even some of them were built like palaces.[259] The *sarais* were divided into dwelling rooms and the chambers for the attendants, who dressed the victuals to the travellers if they pleased only paying nominal charges for both men and animals.[260] The gates were closed at sunset and opened only in the morning. Before closing and opening the gates the person deputed for this, cried loudly giving three warnings to the travellers to look after their things. If anyone found that he had lost his things, the gate remained closed till the thing was recovered.[261]

The experiences of some travellers and merchants, like Manrique, Tavernier, Della Valle and Banarsidas etc. shows that journeys on the routes were not dangerous. The routes passing entirely through the imperial land were safer in comparison to the routes passing through the region of the tributary chiefs and neighboring kingdoms. Tavernier found that the route from Agra to Surat by way of Sironj and Burhanpur was safer than the route passing through the territories of the Chieftains.[262] The Agra-Patna route was 'not very dangerous for robbers'.[263] The experience of Thevenot in the kingdom of Golkunda, shows that the Mughal routes were more safer than other

---

[255] *English Factories, op. cit.*, Vol. 6 (1637-41) p. 61, Vol. 8 (1646-50), pp. 300-302, Vol. 10 (1655-60), p. 315, Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 197, Vol. II, p. 423.

[256] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, pp. 157-158, 198-99, 209, Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 90, 110-111, English Factories *op. cit.*, Vol. 8(1646-50), p. 127, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, English tr. and ed., A Rogers and H. Beveridge, London, 1909-1914, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1989, pp. 375-76

[257] Manrique, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100, Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

[258] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 67, Hamilton, *op. cit.*, Vol I, p. 118.

[259] *Ibid.* Bernier, *op. cit.*, p.233.

[260] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 225, Manrique, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102.

[261] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 67, Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

[262] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

[263] *English Factories, op. cit.*, Vol. 1 (1618-21), p. 269.

contemporary kingdoms.[264] But Della Valle says that the highways in the country of Venkatappa Nayaka were very secure, and that on either side of the road leading to Ikkeri there were "such large and goodly trees, such spacious places underneath for shade and the place so spacious by the thickness of the boughs on high that indeed I never saw in my days a fairer natural grove."[265]

The various means of transportation were elephants[266], camels[267], bullocks[268], bullock carts[269], pack oxen, asses, horses and palaquins (litters) for both the centuries as recorded by the travellers. The use of elephants as a means of conveyance was reserved for the sovereign or to those whom he granted permission to use them.[270] Except for elephants the other means were commonly used by the peoples for different purposes. Terry writes, "The inferior sort of people ride on oxen, horses, mules, camels, or dromedaries or else in slight coaches worth two wheels."[271] At Agra goods were being sent down to Surat in huge camel caravan.[272] Bullocks were used differently in riding which was common practice[273] so was their employment as beast of burden by individuals, traders and merchants as on an average these could carry four great mounds of weight each.[274] The oxen were described as *"fair, large, white with two bunches like some camels, and run, and run, and gallop like horses."*[275] Fryer had also a great praise for the Indian oxen.[276] Thomas Roe mentions the joyride of Emperor Jahangir with his beloved Nurjahan in an open wagon thus, *"drawn by bullocks, himself carter and no man nearre."*[277] Mules and asses[278] were commonly employed as beast of burden due to their less expense also conveyance of goods particularly through uneven paths[279] were well suited for the use of lower segment of population for both purposes. Horses were at times harnessed in wheeled carriages

---

[264] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
[265] Della Valle, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 233, 295.
[266] Monserrate, *op. cit.*, pp. 75, 79 *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, pp. 206, 304.
[267] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 106.
[268] Purchas, *op. cit.*, Vol. X, p. 98.
[269] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 95.
[270] Naqvi, *Urbanisation and Urban Centres under the Great Mughals*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 71.
[271] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 311.
[272] *English Factories, op. cit.*, Vol. 1(1618-21), pp. 74, 90.
[273] Jourdain, *op. cit.*, 127.
[274] Peter Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 95, Purchas, *op. cit.*, Vol. X, p. 98.
[275] Della Valle, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 21.
[276] Fryer, *op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 186.
[277] Roe, *op. cit.*, p. 426.
[278] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 203.
[279] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 160.

called *ghurbahal*[280] but they were not much in vogue except in Gujarat.[281] The use of horses was very little in transport at that time[282] due to limited availability of horse in India and the very high price of the imported varieties.[283]

Indian "Palanquin" had a special attraction on the foreign travellers as a means of transport discussed by almost all the foreign travellers for both the centuries in north as well as in south India also. Thus, a complete picture can be drawn from the travelogues itself regarding a palaquin which is strongly corroborated by the contemporary sources. (Plate- X).

Water Transport

In the North India there were three chief natural waterways, the Indus, the Ganga-Jumna and the Brahmaputra. First two river systems were used fully. In the South India there were also three important river-systems namely, the Godavari, the Krishna and the Kaveri. But, unlike the river-systems in North India these river-systems had some limitations like they were navigable periodically depending on the monsoon and also their course hindered by many natural obstacles.

All these rivers were employed as means of transport and communication carrying goods in vessels of different sizes depending upon the depth and breadth of the river. Boats and country made little ships were used for carrying trade and travelling on these rivers. The advantages of riverine transport were many like low cost, bulky goods of trade could be transported conveniently, etc.

Domingo Paes, Nuniz, Ralph Fitch, Peter Mundy, Manrique, Fryer, Bowrey, Ovington had mentioned the various types of boats in use at the time. Ralph Fitch in 1583 sailed from Agra to Satgaon in Bengal with 180 boats heavily laden with salt, opium, hinge, lead, carpets, etc., each weighing 400 to 500 tonnes. He mentions a boat called *'Pericose'* having 24 or 26 *oares* to row them.[284] The Thatta sarkar of Sind alone had 40,000 boats of various kinds, large and small.[285] Not only quantity but there was also qualities of boats used during the period. Thomas Bowrey had laid a

---

[280] *Ibid.* Vol. I, p. 159.
[281] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 141. In Cambay, Barbosa says there horse carriages were common.
[282] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 283, Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 33, 38, 45, 52, Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 151, Navarrete, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 308.
[283] Raychaudhary, Tapan, *'Inland Trade'. The Cambridge Economic History of India*, ed., Tapan Raychaudhary and Irfan Habib, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1982, Vol. I, p. 348.
[284] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 26.
[285] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 339.

detailed picture on the subject.

The various types of boats recorded by Bowrey are as follows. An *'Olocko'* was rowed with 4 or 6 *oares*. A *'Budgaroo'* was a sort of pleasure boat used by the English and the Dutch chiefs also by Moors Grandees or Governors. A *'Purgoo'* was another type of boat which was mostly used between Hugli and Balasore. These boats were made strong in order to carry 'sufficient load' for ships. A *'Boora'* was comparatively a 'lighter boat' which was rowed with 20 or 30 *oares*. These boats were used for carrying saltpetre and other commodity from Hugli downwards. A *'Patella'* was also used for carrying saltpetre and other goods down from Patna. It was very flat and strong.[286] Besides these, Bowrey had also recorded the use of two types of lighter boats called a *'massoola'* and a *'cattamaran'* at the Choromandel Coast.[287]

John Fryer had travelled in a *massoola* in 1673 from Hugli to Patna and has also given a good account of its structure and strength.[288] Peter Mundy saw boats known as *barges* on August 12, 1632 at Jamuna. They were very light and mostly rowed between Agra and Etawa then from there to Patna and Bengal. They were usually laden with salt. They were generally 300 or 400 tons a piece both sides being extraordinary high used during the rainy season when the river was full and in swift current.[289] Manrique used a rowing boat called *'Porca'* which was common at Hijli. *'Dingi'* was other small boat in use made from a single trunk. *'Baloon'* was also a rowing vessel used in many parts of the Indies.[290] The workmanship of Indians in ship-building was wonderful. The Indian teak used by Indians in building ships was better than the English Oak.[291]

Paes and Nuniz mentions the use of small boats called *'basket boats'*[292] on the rivers of South India. These basket boats were made of cane inside and were covered with leather outside rowed with a kind of paddle were big and strong enough to carry 15-20 persons. Paes remarks, *"in all the kingdom where there are streams there are no other boats but these."*[293]

---

[286] Bowrey, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-29.
[287] *Ibid*, pp. 42-43.
[288] Fryer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 191.
[289] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. p. 224.
[290] Manrique, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 24.
[291] Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
[292] *A Forgotten Empire*, *op. cit.*, pp. 280, 250.
[293] *Ibid*, p. 250.

CHAPTER - V

CHAPTER-V

Representation of Women in the Foreign Traveller's Account

The representation of women in society is an elusive concept as it pertains to the degree of women's access to material resources and social resources within the family, in the community and in the society at large, measured both in absolute terms and relative to men. There are many powerful and influential women in the professional, business, bureaucracy and government who enjoy the privileges and benefits of their status in the society. However, the vast majority of women in the region do not belong to this affluent class. The lives of such women are constrained by many social, economic and religious and political factors.

Historians are taking keen interest in gender history which is about women when talked in a general view. But for a professional historian it is not only about women, it is about them as well as the society as a whole in which they are placed along with men. For a better understanding of the gender based issues of present scenario it is essential to look into the past.

Since the beginning of creation women's status has been a subject of amelioration. Reformers for age have tried to assign them a definite position in society but in spite of their best endeavor it remains a baffling problem to adjust theories with practice. Also in ancient literature there is a lack of unanimity of views regarding the question of status of women in society in India. It is very difficult to draw up an accurate picture of their position in early medieval period too. Generally, women occupied a subordinate position in India.

A historical portrayal of female's socio-economic and cultural life during the period under review from the account of foreign travellers is an interesting study. The foreign travellers had depicted the life of Indian women in detail. They had an uncommon interest in describing the life of an Indian woman. No aspect of her life remained untouched by the foreign travellers. The foreign travellers tried to give the minutest detail of the women's life whether she was a royal lady or a common woman though it was not possible sometimes to find a glimpse of royal ladies and the ladies of higher classes who lived in harems under many obligations.

Women in Harem

The word *harem* was derived from Arabic word *haram* which originally meant a sanctuary but later began to be applied to female apartments as well as to the inmates living therein.[1]

It was called *seraglio* in Turkish and *zenanah* in Persian. It was also called "*harem-sara; harem-gah; mahal-sara; and raniwas.*"[2] Abul Fazl has given it a more appropriate name *Shabistan-i-Iqbal* or *Shabistan-i-Khan.*[3] K.S. Lal writes, "With the passage of time it became synonymous with the female apartment of the elite as also with the inmates lodged therein."[4] European travellers generally preferred the term *harem* but also used the term *mahal.* Pelsaert defines *harem* as "an enclosure surrounded by high walls in which all the wives of King lives."[5]

Upper classes of Hindu society know it as *anthapura.* Varsha Joshi opines that *harem* is very similar to the *Sanskrit* word '*anthapura*' meaning 'the inner apartment' of the household,[6] suggesting their (women) position in the palace secure, sheltered, and barred from common gaze. And no male was allowed to go the *anthapura* without informing the ladies through maid servant. The *zenani deorhi* is known by different names in different states of Rajasthan- *zenana mahal, ranwas, rawala, antehpur, mahine, and bheetar.*[7]

It was not a confined space inhabited exclusively by wives and concubines but rather consisted of a diverse community of a woman of varying ages interacting with each other in many different levels. There were many dependents as well as slaves and servants, many of whom performed specific tasks and held skilled occupations. Thus the *zenana* comprised of women of all relations who were not simply an object of sexual pleasure, as has been perceived. The harem technically speaking is a physical, social and cultural space exclusive to women. In real life, it has

---

[1] Tirmizi, S.A.I. (ed.), "*Introduction*" from *Edicts of the Mughal Harem*, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, 1979, p. 1.

[2] Nath, R, *Private Life of the Mughals of India, 1526-1803 A.D.*, Rupa & Co., New Delhi, 2005, pp. 10-11.

[3] Ansari, M. Azhar, "*The Harem of the Great Mughals*", Islamic Culture, Vol. XXXIV, January, 1960, Article No. 1, pp. 4-5.

[4] Lal, K.S., *Mughal Harem*, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1988, p. 1.

[5] Pelsaert Francisco, *The Remonstrantie*. English tr. W.H. Moreland and P. Geyl, Jahangir's India. Cambridge, 1925, Low Price Publications, New Delhi, rpt. 2001, p. 64.

[6] Joshi, Varsha, *Polygamy and Pudah: Women and Society among Rajputs*, Rawat Pubs., Jaipur, 1995, p. 112.

[7] *Ibid.*

a social world of its own where women perform different kinds of work on the basis of hierarchical division of labour. In fact it was this very hierarchical structure of *zenana* that would induce them to be ambititious. Indrani Chatterjee in her work entitled, '*Gender, Slavery and Law in Colonial India*', opines that the study of harem is exploring of power articulated through hierarchies of age, wealth, social status and sexuality.

The apartments reserved for use of emperor's women were called *mahals*. *Harem* was a place, which was self-sufficient with a full range of staff and administrators. It was both composite and cosmopolitan, providing employment to women of various religions, provinces and nationalities. The public lives of the women of nobility were governed by laws of seclusion, which was less a social/religious and more a class arrangement.

The travellers fantasized about the number of women in the King's palace and provided different figures. Italian adventurer, Niccolao Manucci, said that "ordinarily there are within the *mahal* two thousand women of different races."[8] William Finch called it "*New Moholl, of that longenesse that it may lodge two hundred women in state, all severall.*"[9] Thomas Roe stated that the King "keepe a thowsand."[10] Thomas Coryat, also confirmed Roe's figure by stating that Emperor Jahangir "*keepth a thousand women for his own body.*"[11] The same was the case with nobility and high officials of the state.

Though the composition sometimes differed but the core idea was always the same in all the sources which says that *harem* was especially meant for women of the royalty and was restricted to males even *Allama* like Abul Fazl, could not enter the *harem* as mentioned by K.S. Lal.

The non-access made *harem* more important as it always arose curiosity and rumour among the western reader about the eastern beauties. Richard Burton tells that

---

[8] Manucci, Niccolao, *Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India 1653-1708*, English tr. & ed. William Irvine, London, 1907, Low Price Publications, Delhi, rpt., 1990, Vol. II, pp. 308.

[9] Foster, William (ed.), *Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*, London, 1921, Low Price Publication, Delhi, 1999, p. 164.

[10] Roe, Thomas, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India, 1615-19*, ed. Sir William Foster, New and Revised edition, Oxford University Press, London, 1926, p. 157.

[11] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

the first question asked by a traveller to the East was 'what are the women like'.[12] Bernier writes, "But who is the traveller that can describe from ocular observation the interior of that building?[13] I have sometimes gone into it when the King was absent from Delhi, and once pretty far I thought for the purpose of giving my professional advice in the case of a great lady so extremely ill that she could not be moved to the outward gate, according to the customs observed upon similar occasions, but a Kachemire shawl covered my head, hanging like a large scarf down to my feet, and an eunuch led me by the hand, as if I had been a blind man."[14]

The only men, besides their close relatives, who were allowed to enter the *harem* were the physicians. As some of the Europeans particularly Italian adventurer Francesco Careri, English John Fryer, Bernier and Manucci were physicians or posed as physicians, they were able to provide some eyewitness accounts. Manucci provided the interesting details of the procedure of entering the harem. He stated that "it is the custom in the royal household, when a physician is called within the mahal, for the eunuch to cover his head with a cloth, which hangs down to his waist. They then conduct him to the patient's room, and he is taken out in the same manner." On his first entry into the palace, he was also covered in the same way but "by premeditation, I walked as slowly as I could, in spite of the urging of my guides, the eunuchs. The prince, having seen this, ordered them to uncover me, and that in future I was be allowed to come in and go out without being covered. He said that the minds of Christians were not filthy like those of Mahomedans."[15] Manucci had further to add that as these ladies did not have any opportunity to meet any man except their husbands, some deliberately pretended to be ill so that they got the chance to meet the physicians, to converse with them and have their pulses felt. Manucci has then related what happened at such meetings:

> *The latter (the physician) stretches out his hand inside the curtain; they (the women) lay hold of it, kiss it, and softly bite it. Some, out of curiosity, apply it to their breast, which has happened to me several times; but I*

---

[12] Burton, Richard Francis, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Mecca*, New Delhi, rpt., 1994, Vol. 2, p. 85.
[13] Building here means seraglio.
[14] Bernier, Francois, *Travels in the Mughal Empire A.D. 1656-1668*, Tr. and ed., Archibald Constable and Vincent A. Smith, first published, 1934, Low Price Publications, Delhi, rpt., 1989, p. 267.
[15] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 374-75.

pretended not to notice, in order to conceal what was passing from the matrons and eunuchs then present, and not arouse their suspicions.[16]

It was very difficult for any outsider male to enter the *harem* and observe it himself but what they did was to get information from the sources like eunuchs, female workers who can go inside the *harem* freely for some purpose and this is obvious when Bernier writes further, "You (reader) must be content, therefore, with such a general description as I have received from some of the eunuchs."[17] Pelsaert says, "two or three eunuchs, or more, who are merely purchased Bengali slaves, but are usually faithful to their master, are appointed for each wife, to ensure that she is seen by no man except her husband, and, if an eunuch fails in this duty, he, with everyone else to blame for the Stranger's presence, is in danger of losing his life.[18] Bernier corroborates it when he tells, "I shall not easily forget being once surprised in a similar situation, and how narrowly I escaped the cruel treatment that many cavaliers have experienced but determined not to suffer myself to be beaten and perhaps maimed without a struggle."[19] Thomas Roe also gives the description of the glimpses made on two of principal wives of Jahangir.

Although the harem was a no entry zone for males but some of the travellers were liked so much or got very friendly by the emperor and nobles that they were very much favoured by them and were invited to the harem also. There is a lot of references by the foreign travellers enjoying the privilege of being present at the Emperors' drinking parties or companion at table, where they often drank together to excess."[20] Catrou writes, "All the Franks in Agra, that is, all Europeans of whatsoever nation, were allowed free access to the palace. He continued drinking in their company till the return of day, and he abandoned himself especially to these midnight debaucheries at the season with the Mahomedans observe as a fast with the most scrupulous exactness."[21] Roe remarks, Jahangir had many English servants in his retinue. Father Anthony Monserrate is very important in throwing light on the state of education of Mughal princes and princess. He saw the ladies going on long journeys and writes about them while on their move and in camp. Terry also writes on the way

---

[16] *Ibid.*, 328-31
[17] Bernier, *op. cit.*, 267
[18] Pelsaert, *op.* cit., pp. 65-66.
[19] Bernier, *op.* cit., p. 373.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 274
[21] *Ibid.*

of life of *harem* ladies in camp. William Finch gives some interesting details about the commercial activities of queens and princesses. William Hawkins gives an idea of the expenses on the Royal *harem* and the *nauroz* celebrations.

The expense on the harem was 'extraordinary', as it never amounted to less than one crore of rupees per annum.[22]According to Hawkins, "the expences daily for his (King's) women by the day is thirtie thousand rupia."[23] John Jourdain also confirmed that "his wives, there slaves and his concubines' doe spend him an infinite deale of money, incredible to be believed."[24] Bernier had emphasized also "the enormous expenses of the seraglio, where the consumption of fine clothes of gold, and brocade, silks, embroideries, pearls, musk, amber and sweet essences, is greater than can be conceived." Careri maintains that the expenditure on the harem was twice than the amount spent on maintenance of the abundance of elephants, horses and servants.[25]

Manucci writes in detail regarding pay and pension of the inmates of the harem. They received special presents in cash from the King from time to time. Their only business was to live in style and splendour in order to make themselves attractive to the king. Manucci described the royal antics when "the king took it into his head to fix the costume of the women in his harem, dividing them into groups or companies- that is, so many got up in such a manner and in such colours, another company in another colour, and so on for the whole of them. He was also anxious that these clothes should all be of the finest materials procurable."[26] Manucci also added that the King also built a special hall "for the greater satisfaction of his lusts". It was twenty cubits wide, "adored throughout with great mirrors". It consumed a huge amount of money and "the gold alone cost fifteen millions of rupees, not including the enamel work and precious stones, of which no account was kept." Manucci believed that "all this expenditure was made so that he might obscenely observe himself and his favourite women."[27]

---

[22] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 338-39, 341

[23] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 104.

[24] Jourdain, John, *The Journal of John Jourdain 1608-1617, Describing His Experiences in Arabia, India, And The Malay Archipelago*, ed. William Foster, Hakluyt Society, Cambridge, 1905, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, rpt. 1992, p. 165.

[25] Careri, G.F. Gemelli, *A Voyage Round the World by Dr. John Francis Gemelli Careri, Part IIIrd*, ed., Surendranath Sen, Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri, The National Archives of India, Qweensway, New Delhi, 1949, p. 237.

[26] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 397.

[27] *Ibid.* Vol. I, p. 188.

The travellers have described a special bazaar (fair) which were for the women of *harem* at the time of the *Nauroz*. English traveller, Peter Mundy, mentioned that in this fair, the wives and daughters of all the nobles attended as "*noe man daringe to refuse the sendinge them if the king require them (although of the greatest Amrawe).*" He has also given the reason for holding such a fair: "*these they do because the Kinges weomen are never suffered to goe abroad, that they may then see the varieties, curiosities etts., necessaries that are in the Cittie or elsewhere.*"[28] However, in contrast to Mundy, many European travellers attributed it to the erotic pleasures of the Emperor. Coryate described that "*by this meanes he (Emperor) attains to the sight of all the prettie wenches of the towne.*"[29] Manucci's description was also filled with erotic allusion. He wrote that Emperor Shah Jahan's only interest lay in searching beautiful women "to serve his pleasure." With this purpose in view he arranged eight day's long fair in which hordes of women, which when once counted numbered more than thirty thousand were invited. They attended the fair with a variety of goods the best piece being "her own body." Honourable women avoided the festival but those who showed up, vied for the love of the Emperor who had a round of all the "stalls" and whomsoever, amongst the sellers, "attracted his fancy" was in due time "produced" in the royal presence through his appointed "matrons" who had been given "an agreed-on-signal" for the purpose."[30] Thus for Manucci, the buyers, the sellers, the merchandise and the bargain nothing was real. The entire show was meant for facilitating the King to select women for his carnal pleasures.

Eunuchs played an important role both inside and outside of the Mughal *harem*. They performed different functions and for that were given handsome allowances. There "Virile Parts are off smooth, to prevent the least Temptation from the Sex."[31] They were very friendly with the women folk. Princess won them over through generous financial help and at times "gets permission to enjoy that of which I cannot speak." They also facilitated men to clandestinely enter harem and obtain "the

---

[28] Mundy, Peter, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*, ed. R.C. Temple, Hakluyt Society, London, 1914, Vol. II, p. 238.
[29] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 279.
[30] Manucci, *op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 188.
[31] Ovington, John, *A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689 by J. Ovington*, ed., H.G. Rawlinson, Oxford University Press, London, 1929, Asian Educationa Services, New Delhi, rpt., 1994, p. 127.

favour of husbands." They also acted as their spies because they were always found eavesdropping.[32]

In the opinion of a few European travellers, the Indian women were though not allowed to go out without veil and were shut up in *harem*; they were mostly crafty and cunning and generally controlled their husbands. It was Thomas Roe who gave currency to the notion that Nur Jahan and her junta- comprising her father, brother and son-in-law – wielded the real power of the Empire and Mughal Emperor Jahangir was a puppet in their hands.[33] Roe contended that "Normahall fulfill (s) the observation that in all actions of consequence in a court, especially in faction, a woman is not only always an ingredient, but commonly a principall drugg and of most virtue; and shee shows that they are not incapable of conducting business, nor herself voyd of witt and subtiltye."[34] Pelsaert wrote that the Emperor "disregarding his own person and position, has surrendered himself to a crafty wife of humble lineage,... he (Jahangir) is King in name only, while she and her brother Asaf Khan hold the kingdom firmly in their hands."[35] In the power struggle between Prince Khurram and Prince Khusrau, when the latter wanted to visit the royal court, it was Nur Jahan who did not allow the king to see his son, even though "the King had fallen downe and taken his mistris (Nur Jahan) by the feete to obteyne her leave to see his sonne."[36]

During the war of succession among the sons of Shahjahan, the latter's two daughters; Jahanara and Roshanara also played an important role. Bernier, while conceding their contribution in the war, asserted that "the most momentous events are too often caused by the influence of the sex, although the people may be ignorant of this fact, and may indulge in vain speculations as to the cause of the agitation they deplore."[37]

The pleasures of the harem life were not the monopoly of the sovereigns only. On the other hand, almost all the nobles, including even the Hindus, had their own harems generally designed on the royal pattern. The harem life might have produced demoralizing effects on the rulers and the nobility alike.

---

[32] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p.74.
[33] Shujauddin Muhammad and Razia, *The Life and Times of Noor Jahan*, Caravan Book House, Lahore, 1967, p. 4.
[34] Roe, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
[35] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
[36] Roe, *op. cit.*, p. 235, Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 206.
[37] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

The Mogul nobility, in fact, practically sunk in the vices of the age, wasted the major portion of its huge wealth over luxury and debauchery. Pelsaert writes, "As a rule noble had three or four wives, the daughters of worthy men. All lived together in the noble's Mahal or palace which consisted of an enclosure, surrounded by numerous slaves, of her own – 10, 20 or even 100 according to her fortune".[38] The women of nobility enjoyed almost all the facilities enjoyed by the royal ladies like they were also served by a great number of slaves. Their palaces were beautified with water-falls, tanks and gardens.[39] These royal and noble class ladies spent a huge amount of money over their dress, ornament and amusements. Manucci observed, "In the cool of the evening they drink a great deal of wine, for the women learn the habit quickly from their husbands".[40] Manucci also holds that all the nobles practically followed the same methods as the Emperor for maintaining strict supervision over the inmates of their harems.[41] Most of the Hindu Rajas and the nobles also maintained their harems like their Muslim counterparts, but they normally kept their concubines in separate establishments and not in their homes. Among the Hindus the offspring of such irregular unions formed a lower caste occupying definitely a social status inferior to those born in wedlock.

The harems of the nobles were also great centres of mirth and gaiety, where numerous dancing damsels of uncommon grace and voice got full opportunities to exhibit their talents. Pelsaert refers to the mirthful and licentious life of the nobles thus: 'The husband sits like a golden cock among the gilded hens until midnight or until passion or drink sends him to bed'.[42]

Women and Profession

The study of the social division of labour between sexes focuses on the women's social status. Scanty information regarding women's profession lay scattered in the travelogues of the period. Also the information on women's work and profession is difficult to be found for the entire pre-colonial period as there are only

[38] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-65.
[39] Bernier, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-247.
[40] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 149.
[41] *Ibid.* Vol. II, p.352.
[42] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

incidental references in the Indo-Persian and the literature for sixteenth-eighteenth centuries.

The management of house and household chores were confined to women in all class and society. The skills, expertise, talent and experience that were required in the management of the household were not recognized by the male dominated society, and were conceived as natural and therefore inferior in attribute of feminity. Whatever division of work is allotted for woman is considered to be compatible with her natural or biological function and thus, domestic chores are assigned to her.

The maintenance of the household requires doing certain kinds of work and hard labour. In case of the majority of ordinary women, the work around household consists of a great variety of subsistence activities such as rearing children, carrying water, collecting fuel, cooking food, serving meals, food transportation, tending cattle, spinning cloth for house use, etc.

Wealthy households include extra household female member such as mistress, wet-nurses, slaves or servants and concubines. The presence of servants or maids among richer families would obviously tend to lighten the work of the women. They would have to do less manual work. In these families, there were a number of lower class recruits to take over the drudgery of housework and childcare.

The female servants formed an important section of the household. The servants, both male and female received their wages in cash in addition to some food and clothing. Higher caste families hired women of lower orders to fetch water from well and for other related services. These women were known as *Panibharin* and were usually allowed food and clothing than paid by a certain sum for each pot of water but many a times earned *annas* per month. Many unfortunate widows gave themselves up as domestic servants among richer family in return for food and shelter.

Slave women did much of the household tasks. Lekhapaddhati cites women slaves doing household works as grinding, cutting, smearing the floor, sweeping the floor, fetching water, milking cattles, agricultural work, etc.[43] They were used for

[43] Prasad Pushpa, *"Female Slavery in Thirteenth Century Gujarat Documents in the Lekhapaddhati"*, IHR, 1988-89, ed. Vivekanand Jha,Vol. XV, No. 1-2, p. 270.

spying[44], as well or given in dowry.[45] Thus the tasks performed by female slaves were diverse and multiform.

The condition of female slave was not much changed in the centuries under study. 'The ordinary slaves lived with nothing. their clothing is only white linen. which though fine was bought very cheap; and their diet for the most part is nothing but rice, so that everybody, even of mean fortune, keeps a great family and is splendidly attended this is easy enough. considering the very small charge'. observes Pietro Della Valle in 1623 A.D. in Surat.[46] Ovington in 1698 A.D. also give similar kind of information from Gujarat, according to him due to the easy availability and cheap maintenance ordinary people maintain female slaves, or concubines.[47]

The establishment of the profession of concubinage had been a well established feature of royal household wheather it was the Hindu Kingdom of the South or the Mughal Empire in the North.

To enforce discipline among the numerous concubines, matrons were placed over them.[48] The eunuchs were placed as sentries over them and were allowed entry in the harem as male attendants of the harem. But in case of misbehaviour with any of the concubines, the concubines could sometimes deal strictly with them.[49] Nevertheless, the welfare and entertainment of concubines was also taken care of, along with that of Begums. In the festive gatherings, for the entertainment of wives and concubines the musicians and dancers performed and female servants were attached in service to them.[50] The luxuries and spending by wives and concubines had been commented upon a great deal by the European travellers.[51]

---

[44] Badaoni, Abdul Qadir, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh,* English tr. and ed. Vol.1, George S.A. Ranking and Vol.2, W.H. Lowe, reprint-first published, 1899, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, 1973, Vol. II, p.390.

[45] *Ibid.* Vol. II, p. 341.

[46] Della Valle, Pietro, *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India, 1623-24,* ed. Edward Grey, Hakluyt Society, London, 1892, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, rpt. 1991, Vol. I, p. 42.

[47] Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

[48] Manucci,

[49] Laet, Joannes De, *The Empire of the Great Mogol.* Tr. J.S. Hoyland & S.N. Banerjee (annotated), Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, New Delhi, First published, 1928, Second edition, 1974. p. 99

[50] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 308.

[51] Early Travels in India, op. cit., p. 104. Hawkins informs that the expenses daily for his women is 30, 000 rupees while Jourdain finds it difficult to compute and spending according to him was infinite. Early Travels.

The concubines were seen as threat to the stability of married life. In the description of noble's harem, in which were numerous slave girls (and potential concubines), the tension is evident. The helpless wives unable to check their husband treated the slave-girls with great severity. Pelsaert reports 'if one of the pretty slave-girls takes his fancy, he calls her to him and enjoys her, his wife not daring to show any sign of displeasure, but dissembling though she will take it out of the slave-girl later on.[52] Mundy, similarly, has found a slave-girl, near Sikandra (Agra), only 10 years old, who had runaway upon the 'hard usage' of her mistress; the cause being, as the girl informed Mundy, that the mistress had conceived her husband's affection towards her.[53]

There appears to be a lot of jealousies on part of the masters to guard their women against other men. There are numerous references of destruction of harem so that they could not be taken by the victor. For instance De Laet reports of Qasim Khan, governor of Bengal, leaving all his property but killing all his women when he had to flee from the royal forces.[54]

The institution of concubinage became the social instrument for integrating captive women into household of their captors thus assuring their captors not only their loyal services but also those of their off-springs. Concubinage is legal in the Islamic world.

An important role was played by women as midwives and nurses of babies. Midwifery is typically a woman's work. These midwives and nurses invariably appear in Mughal paintings, depicting scenes of birth of Princes like the birth of Prince Salim. (Plate- XI). Fryer (1672-81 A.D.) observed:

> *"At their labour they seldom call midwives, being petty quick that way, though there are not a few live well by that profession."*[55]

---

[52] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
[53] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 88.
[54] Laet, Joannes De, *op. cit.*, p. 194.
[55] Fryer, John, *A New Account of East India and Persia Being Nine Years' 1672-81*, ed. William Crooke, Hakluyt Society, London, 1909, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1992, Vol. I, p. 281.

Chamars, *Hajams*, etc., the lower caste women mainly performed it, for it is considered to be a polluting tasks. It is quite an underpaid work. It provides an income for desperately poor women with a few marketable skills.

Wet- nursing is another work that is obviously exclusive to women called *dhays* who nurse children. Lactating mothers would sell their milk to elites, and for the service so rendered they received and other favours by way of compensation.[56] Almost all women of ruling and elite families required the services of the wet nurse. In a polity where becoming a mother was important the availability of nurses was critical for survival of any infant.[57] Besides, among ordinary families the need of a wetnurse might arise if the mother was ailing with some problem and therefore could not feed the child. Further, the presence of *dhatri* could relieve the mother and hence geared up the production process.

On several occasions, a *dhatri* could use her position to acquire social and material benefits[58] and a dignified position. If she becomes a *dhatri* of king's children, she would obviously develop a bond of love and care with children and have the opportunity to get her family members placed in good position and could exercise enough authority herself.[59]

Besides this the fetching of water from the village well was another customary chore of Indian women. Fryer observed in 1676 A.D.,

> *"Indian wives dress their husband's victual, fetch water and grind their corn with a hand-mill, when they sing, chat and are merry."*[60]

A country scene from *Anwar-i-Suhaili* (1597 A.D.) shows men and women at work, here a man is standing on the top of the well and a woman has a basket on her head. (See Plate- XII). Abul Fazl, recorded the observation of Akbar in the *Ain-i-*

---

[56] Begum Gulbadan, *Humayun Nama*, Tr. Annette S. Beveridge, Low Price Publications, Delhi, First Published, 1902, Third rpt. 1996, p. 95.

[57] Chatterjee Indrani, *Gender, Slavery and Law in Colonial India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999, p. 67.

[58] *English Factories in India, (1618-1669)*, ed., William Foster, Clarendon, Oxford, (1906-27), Vol. 10 (1655-1660), pp. 73-74.

[59] Fazl Abul, Ain-i-Akbari, English tr. Blochmann, revised by Phillot Vol. I (reprint-first published, 1927), Calcutta, 1965; H.S. Jarrett, revised by J.N. Sarkar, Vol. II & III (2nd edition – first published 1949), Delhi, 1965, Vol. I, p. 69.

[60] Fryer, *op. cit.*, Vol II, p. 454.

Akbari that women were fetching water from rivers, tanks and well, and balancing the vessels on their head.

The women during the sixteenth and seventeenth century were not only confined to the household work but opted many other professions as well. Women were involved in agriculture work also.[61] Women were not only confined to domestic farming, but they also worked as part time wage earner. After the harvest was collected from the field it created more work for women. The beating of rice and husking of other grains was exclusive a women's job. The grinding of the grain on the rotary hand-mill was also mainly done by women.[62] The peasant's housewife did not perform tasks subordinate to those of men but participated equally in the process of agricultural production. Norris reports that the women at Coromandel Coast did various agricultural works like cleaning, grinding the paddy and carrying the wood.[63]

At Calicut washermen were both 'women as well as men', they were not only competent but also cheap.[64] (Plate- XIII). Women are seen preparing lime-mortar, and carrying it in Pan, held in hand or over their heads, to the mason at work in the painting showing Akbar's construction of the Agra fort. (See Plate- XIV & XV).

Another important profession adopted by women for their livelihood was to work as public entertainers. Under this category comes the profession of singing and dancing, acrobatics and jugglery etc.

Singing and dancing was very old profession of women. This profession was carried out by women who worked as public entertainers.

Pietro Della Valle (1623 A.D.) in Gujarat mentions that:

> *"Amongst the mahometan women there were infinite, who go every day publickly to house and where they please, to play music, sing, dance and do what else belongs to their profession."*[65]

---

[61] Shireen Moosvi, *History of Civilization of Central Asia*, Chahryar Adle and Irfan Habib (eds.) Unesco Publishing House, 2003, pp. 366-372.
[62] Shireen Moosvi, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-14.
[63] Norris, William, *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb (1699-1702)*, ed., Harihar Das, condensed and rearranged, S.C. Sarkar, Calcutta, 1959, p. 121.
[64] Fryer, *op. cit.*, p. 456.
[65] Della Valle, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 65.

These public entertainers were using instruments like drums, bells etc. Many times they were used for entertainment of guests by playing instruments, dancing and singing. These women entertainers were some time worked as prostitutes as well. Nicholas Withington (1612-16) in his account of Gujarat mention that,

> *"At our being here (Gujarat) the women of towne came into carvan and danced, everyman giving them some thinge; and afterwards they asked openly, who wants to be bed fellow."*[66]

Many women prostitutes were attached to the royal court and nobles establishments. Women were also serving as attendants and servants, they were appointed to perform a variety of tasks high and low, skilled and unskilled in aristocratic households.

From the accounts of foreigners it seems that another class of female entertainers were acrobat (*nats*) and jugglers. In Baburnama there is a reference by Babur to entertainers called *lulis*. Perhaps they were acrobats.[67] The accounts of Peter Mundy also talks of there *nats*.[68] Barbosa while talking of Vijayanagar comments that, 5 to 6 thousand women who march with army. They are musicians, dancers and acrobats very quick at their performances.[69] Young girls also performed acrobatics feats for entertainments[70] of their royal patrons.

Commercial Activities

Women played a considerable role in the commercial activities during the period under review also. Their involvement in the mercantile activities was not a new phenomenon in India because there are examples in history where we can clearly see women handling business and trade independently. Their involvement in trade and commerce came most often from ruling family and noble class women. Women in the imperial harem were actively engaged in commercial activities.

---

[66] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, pp. 208-09.

[67] Babur, Zahiruddin Muhammad, *Baburnama* or *Memoirs of Babur*, English tr. from the Original text by Annette Susannah Beveridge, Oiental, New Delhi, 1922, rpt.1979, Vol. II, pp. 633-4.

[68] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 255.

[69] Barbosa, Duarte, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, English tr. and ed. Mansel Longworth Dames, 1918-21, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi (rpt. 1989), Vol. I, p. 211.

[70] Thevenot, Jean de, *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, ed., Surendranath Sen, The National Archives of India, Queensway, New Delhi, 1949, p. 109.

Jahangir's own mother, Maryam Zamani, for example, owned ship called *Rahimi* through which she traded with the markets of West Asia and the Persian Gulf. The significance of *Rahimi* in the overseas commercial activities is reflected from the fact that when in 1611 it was captured by the Portuguese they demanded 30,000 rials for its release.[71]

Maryam Zamani showed a remarkable interest in trade and commerce, particularly overseas trade. She was among the most well-known of the ship owners: "the Great Mogul's mother was a great adventurer, which caused the Great Mogul to drive the Portigals out of this place".[72] Her ship carried merchandise for the vendors of Holy city, Mecca, and trafficked in pilgrims going for *hajj*.[73] There is evidence to suggest that the queen herself invested in the purchase and sale of commodities freighted on *Rahimi* : *"Captain Hawkins brought indigo out of queen mother's hand, her factor having made price for itt....."*,[74] " arranged by Queen herself"[75] or those acting under her protection .[76] Besides, indigo other Indian commodities belonging to the Queen were also loaded on the Ship.[77]

An extremely important woman actively involved in overseas trade was Nur Jahan. Foreign trade in her time was quite flourishing and lucrative. She owned her own ships and was actively engaged in overseas trade and commerce. Some of her commercial enterprises brought her immense profits, especially in indigo and embroidered cloth trade.[78] She was an extremely astute and practical merchant, showing no hesitation in cooperating with the Portuguese for commercial security and profits.

Several of her business ventures were based on the cooperation of private Portuguese merchants, and her ships would regularly pay *cartaz* dues to the Portuguese.[79] Her relations with the English merchants were on a better footing and

---

[71] *Letters Received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East (1602-1617)*, ed. Frederick Charles Danvers (Vol. I) & William Foster (Vol. II-VI), Sampson Low, London, (1896-1902), Vol. I, (1602-13), pp. 186-8.
[72] *Ibid.* Vol. II (1613-15), p. 43.
[73] *Ibid.* Vol. I (1602-13), pp. 163, 167, 178, 180-4.
[74] W. Foster (ed.), *The Journal of John Jourdain 1608-17* (Delhi, 1992), pp. 155-6.
[75] Foster, *Early Travels*, p. 123.
[76] Jourdain, *op. cit.*, pp. 156, 186, 191.
[77] *Ibid.* p. 209.
[78] *Letters Receieved*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I (1602-13), p. 305.
[79] *English Factories*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1 (1618-21), p. xv.

sometimes, she issued orders granting them concession. In, 1627 she passed an order exempting the English from payment of road dues and transit tolls. She sent her goods in English ships, preferring them to those of the Portuguese, and even the Indian merchants.

Referring to Nur Jahan's interest in trading activities. Roe informs that. "on going to Jahangir, every way of new points of power, however, the queen Nur Jahan, asked to see the ambassador's seal. keeping it overnight.[80] Roe further acknowledge in his Journal that Nur Jahan played a crucial role in his negotiations with the imperial court, as also in determining the demand of foreign goods and luxury items in the imperial court.[81]

Thomas Roe called "Nur Jahan as his solicitor and her brother as his broker."[82] He repeatedly emphasizes her special interest in trade and commerce and the support he and English had found in the development of their own trade in Mughal India.[83] E.B. Findley is quite correct when she calls Nur Jahan a shrewd business woman who saw the English as an opportunity for expanding overseas commerce.[84]

Jahanara was another important woman in Mughal harem about whom we have much evidence concerning her interest in trade and commerce. She fully participated in trading operations and owned several ships chiefly *Sahibi* and *Ganjawar*. Her shipping interests had a dual objective. The first was to increase profits from overseas commerce, and the seconds, was to assist the pilgrims going for *Hajj*. In 1643, one of her ships carrying for *hajj* included a cargo of goods worth rs.10 to 15000 which were to be sold at Jeddah and with the profits thus accrued her agents were to buy horses.[85]

So much was her importance that for trading purposes everyone had to win favours of principal members of court and esp. Jahanara, who was particularly interested in revenue,[86] and it was very important "to procure her *nishan* to assist us

---

[80] Roe, *op.* cit., pp. 401-404, 412.
[81] *Ibid.* p. 436.
[82] *Letters Received, op. cit.*, Vol. VI, (1617) July to December, pp. 150.
[83] *Ibid.* Vol. IV, (1616), pp. 310.
[84] Findley, E. B., *Nur Jahan, Empress of Mughall India*, Oxford University Press, New York/ Oxford, 1993, p. 258.
[85] *English Factories, op. cit.*, Vol. 9 (1651-1654), p. 11.
[86] *Ibid.* p. xi.

therein".[87] She was also bribed by English *"by procuring some oyles, nutmegs, cloves, and mace of which these sorts the Begum is very desirous."*[88]

It was not just in foreign trade that women were deeply involved. Even the internal trade had a considerable amount of participation of women. These women also catered to the demands of internal market. The royal women who had important centres as their *jagirs* drew a lot of revenue from the internal markets. Broach city brought on income of 2, 30, 000 *mahmudis* for its owner, Nur Jahan, by way of tolls from internal trade.[89] Nur Jahan also had Toda as her *jagir* which lay 80/km. South-east of Ajmer on medieval trade route from Surat to Agra and brought her an annual income of 2lakhs of rs.[90] At Sikandra, her officers collected duties on all goods coming from East, before being sold presumably in the profitable market of the main city (Agra).[91] Without these supplies this country, Agra, and its environs could not be provided with food, and would almost die of hunger so that this was a place of great traffic.[92]

We have a whole range of Edicts from Mughal harem which reflect the role of royal ladies in commercial activities. There is one *hukm* of Nur Jahan dated 27 January 1665 where she announces measures to encourage people, particularly merchants, to settle down at Nur Gunj *katra* in *qasba* Sironj.[93] This clearly highlights the interest that imperial women undertook to increase trading activities. Royal women also constructed and maintained *sarais* on important junctions of trade routes for the convenience of traders.[94] Jahanara also took active interest in the collection of revenues.[95] In one *nishan*, she acknowledges receipt of musk[96] and in another *nishan*, she gets interested in ice boxes from Garhwal and she complains about ice not coming from her own show house (21/27 June 1678).[97] In another nishan, she instructs her officials to be diligent in collection of snow and to make due payment to labourers

---

[87] *Ibid.* Vol 8 (1646-1650), pp. 219-20.
[88] *Ibid.* Vol 9 (1651-1654), p. 11.
[89] Prakash, Om, *The Dutch Factories in India 1617-1623, A Collection of Dutch East India Company documents pertaining to India*, Munshiram, New Delhi, 1984, p. 134.
[90] Jahangir, Nooruddin Muhammad, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, English tr. and ed., A Rogers and H. Beveridge, London, 1909-1914, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1989, Vol. I, p. 308.
[91] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[92] *Ibid.* p. 41.
[93] Tirmizi. "Introduction in Edicts". op. cit., p. 30.
[94] Manucci, op. cit., Vol., I, p. 97.
[95] *English Factories*, *op. cit.*, Vol 9(1651-1654), p. xi.
[96] Tirmizi. "*Introduction in Edicts*". *op. cit.*, p. 104.
[97] *Ibid.*, p. 108

(28/28 June 1680).[98] Manucci informs us that she had an income of 3m. of rs. in addition to revenues of the port of Surat.[99]

The trading world in Medieval India comprised of lot more activities than large scale trade. The business of insurance did involve her presence. In one instance, Huri Khanum, Begam Saheb's nurse had promised to procure Begum's *nishan* regarding the whole affair.[100] There is evidence to suggest that in money lending operations, women did play an important role. Their chief borrowers were the traders and merchants of the same area. There is also some evidence of even the English merchants borrowing money from "a Banyan woman".[101]

Besides this, women's participation in petty commerce seems to have been quite considerable. Women used to travel about to different villages markets carrying their wares on little ponies. The peddling trade has another aspect also which was very lucrative. There had been *sarais* which were intended for the travellers[102] and since the time of Humayun, many were built upon the royal highways throughout the realm.[103] Almost all the foreign travellers have spoken about caravansarais and its dwellings and comforts, there were divided into dwelling rooms and chambers with a male or female Regent for women also carry on this occupation.[104] Tavernier mentions that here at *sarais* there came some women who sold flour, rice, butter, vegetables who make their business to prepare bread and cook rice[105] through some might say that *sarais* was a work of charity but it had commercial purpose and was a place for entertainment too.

Matrimonial Practices

Marriage was an important social-institution during the medieval period in India both in Muslim as well as in the Hindu society. The institution of marriage and

---

[98] *Ibid.*
[99] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 208.
[100] *English Factories*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 10 (1655-1660), pp. 15, 73-4
[101] *Ibid.* Vol. 2(1622-1623), p. 234.
[102] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 67.
[103] *Ibid.* Vol. I, p. 115.
[104] Manrique, Fray Sebastien, *Travels of Fray Sebastien Manrique. 1629-1643*, ed., C.E. Luard & Father H. Hosten, Hakluyt Society, London, 1926, Vol.II, pp.100-1.
[105] Tavernier, Jean-Baptiste, *Travels In India*, English tr. & ed. V. Ball and William Crooke, Low Price Publications, Delhi, rpt., 2000, Vol. I, p. 45.

aspects related finds an important topic of observance by the travellers of the period under review. There was not much difference in the prevalence of this institution as before the advent of Mughals in India. The eleventh century traveller Alberuni writes about the custom of marriage in India as *"The Hindu marry at very young age; therefore the parents arrange the marriage of their sons..... husbands and wife can only be separated by death as they have no divorce."*[106]

Marriage was more of a family question than a personal concern of the marrying couple.[107] The bridegroom and the bride have no share in choice as it is made by the parents if alive otherwise family and friends.[108] Even the example of arrange marriage is found in the royalty. The ladies of the Imperial household took great interest in match making. Due to untimely death of Mumtaz Begum, *"Jahanarah took the responsibility of performing Dara's marriage"*.[109] Akbar favoured the idea of allowing freedom to the boys and girls in matrimonial matters. In India a man cannot see the woman to whom he is marrying, there are peculiar obstacles, but His Majesty maintains that the consent of the bride and bridegroom and the permission of the parents are absolutely necessary in marriage contracts.[110]

Inter-caste marriage was out of fashion.[111] Marriage generally took place between boys and girls of the same caste, sub-caste at profession. Nicholas Withington (c. 1612-13) mentions that son of a baker married to a baker's daughter.[112] But many Rajput princesses were married to Mughal prince shows that the inter-caste marriages were prevalent among royalty for enhancing power and prestige through matrimonial alliances. The Royal Marriage celebration had grand show. The celebration of marriage in royal and noble class started with the wedding feast very much like the Hindu custom. These rejoicings continued for many days. Friends and Relations gave different kinds of presents in the trays full of fruits-dry and fresh; cotton, silk, gold etc. known as 'Kishtis'. The marriage procession that started from the bridegroom's house was similar to that of the Hindu custom. Firework, singing and

---

[106] Sachau, Edward C (ed.), *Alberuni's India*, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, rpt. 1989, Vol. II, p. 154.
[107] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 54.
[108] Pelsaert,*op. cit.*, p. 81.
[109] Ansari, M. A., *Social Life of the Mughal Emperors (1526-1707)*, Shanti Prakashan, Allahabad, 1974, p.87.
[110] *Ain*, *op. cit.*, Vol.I, p. 287.
[111] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 225
[112] *Early Travels in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

dancing women, with a large cavalry to escort the procession was a common feature of the Royal wedding. The 'Mulla' performed the marriage ceromony. At the end, the bridegroom was given a box containing a paste called 'henna' (mehndi). The bridegroom took the bride to his house carrying the dowry along with him.[113] The Muslim middle and lower class marriage were performed almost in the same manner; the difference was only that of standard.

Many evil practices were related to marriage like early marriage, dowry, divorce, widow-remarriage, polygamy etc. These social malpractices had weakened the dignity of women in general.

Early marriage was a distinctive feature of Indian society. Account of foreign travelers confirms its popularity during the period under study. Ralph Fitch (1503-91), remarks the child marriage, that

"They say (people), they marry their children
So young, because it is an order that, when
The man dieth, the woman must be burned
With him, so that if the father die, yet they
May have a father in law to help to bring up the
Children which bee leaves their sonnes without
Wives, nor their daughter without husbands"[114]

Withington (1612-16) also observes the same when he mention that Banias marry their children at very young age, about three years or under, sometime marriages were fixed before the birth of child.[115] It was equally prevalent in Muslims. Careri says. "Mehometan Indian marry very young, but the idolaters at all ages."[116] Middle and lower class people were anxious to get their daughters married as soon as possible after attaining puberty because they were very particular about the chastity of their womenfolk. Abul Fazl writes that the people of India were very eager to give their children in marriage at a very tender age.[117] Akbar was anxious that young girls should not be given away in marriage because of the hazard this pose to their health. The anxiety was reflected in actual prohibition of marriage of girls below the age of

---

[113] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp.150-152
[114] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.
[115] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 221. If two neighbors women were pregnant, they make promise before the birth of child and fixed marriages of their unborn children.
[116] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 248.
[117] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 288.

puberty, defined as 14 or 12years.[118]

Inspite of prohibition girls were married at early age during the seventeenth century. Among both Hindus and Muslims girls were married at the age of four to seven years[119] and cohabit at between eleven-twelve, or sometime sooner.[120] Manucci and Thevenot refer to the practice of keeping certain gap between the performance of the formal marriage ceremonies and the actual commencement of the conjugal life.[121] It indicates cohabitation was not before the age of puberty.

The custom of dowry was prevalent among all classes of hindu society.[122] Dowry was the gift generally given to daughters at the time of marriage. Usually household staff and slaves were gifted at the time of marriage as dowry. Dowry was demanded, and sometimes parents disregarded the suitability of the match[123] and cared primarily for a rich dowry. In some castes and localities the bridegroom had to pay money to the bride's guardians.[124] The Muslim society, particularly its richer and higher sections, could not remain altogether unaffected by the system of dowry. Both Badauni and Nizamuddin Ahmed refer to the prevalence of this practice among the high class Moslems.[125]

The right of separation or divorce is allowed by Muslim law but conditionally. Manucci holds that divorce among the Muslims was possible but the husband had to pay compensation to the divorced wife for her maintenance.[126] But, among the Hindus it was not allowed, except in the cases of low castes and the Shudras.[127] Manucci writes, "But this practice is not known anywhere in the Brahman or Rajah caste, nor those of the shopkeepers. In these castes if the wife was divorced, she could not remarry'.[128]Abul Fazl also holds that divorce was not customary among the Brahmans.[129]

Remarriage was not permitted for women. Alberuni (c.1030) mention if a wife loses her husband by death, she cannot marry another man. She has only to choose

---

[118] *Ibid.* Vol. I, pp. 204, 213.
[119] John Fryer, *op. cit.*, Vol I, pp. 181 and 185, Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
[120] Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
[121] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 58-59, Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p.117.
[122] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 248.
[123] Purchas, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
[124] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 55.
[125] Ojha, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
[126] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 152.
[127] *Ibid.* Vol. III, pp. 152, 170.
[128] *Ibid.* Vol. III, p.70.
[129] *Ain*, Vol. III, p. 339.

between two things either to remain a widow as long as she lives, as to burn herself.[130] Middle and lower class women, after the death of husband, they never can marry again, but lives to bewail her widowhood, and perhaps her virginity, in all days of life.[131] Sometime husbands died before the fulfillment of marriage and the widow obliged to disconsolate virginity all her life and must never contact another man. Sometime they became widow at six or seven years of age.[132]

Remarriage for Muslim men after the death of wife or during her life time was common in India. 'A man can marry four wives',[133] besides they take liberty to keep as many women as they were able.[134] Akbar was keen to develop the system of monogamy. Badauni mention that in 1587, Akbar issued a decree that no one should marry more than one wife, unless she was barren.[135] Abul Fazl tells us of no such order issued by Akbar but he support monogamy.[136]

Polygamy is allowed in Islam with certain rules but strictly restricted in Hindu religion. Inspite of the fact, we do find evidence of its prevalence in the richer sections of Hindu society also. In the rich Muslim society it was prevalent commonly. Generally Hindus people were monogamous. Della Valle writes, "Hindus take but one wife and never divorce her till death, except for the cause of adultery."[137] The above statement finds corroboration in the accounts of Mandelslo and Hamilton also.[138] In the extreme case if a wife proved to be barren, they had the liberty to marry another with the consent of the Brahmans.[139] The result of polygamy was the bitter relationship existing between the co-wives in the household of a polygamist.[140]

Social Customs

Many social customs that were prevalent in the society of that period considerably hampered the progress of women, both Hindu and Muslim. The customs

---

[130] *Alberuni's India, op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 155

[131] Fryer, *op. cit.*, Vol I, p. 309, Della Valle, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

[132] Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

[133] *Alberuni's India, op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 155.

[134] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 320.

[135] Badaoni, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 356.

[136] *Ain, op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 241. Abul Fazl records a saying of Akbar that 'to seek more than one wife is to hurt oneself one may do so only if the first wife proves barren or her offspring does not survive'.

[137] Della Valle, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 83.

[138] Hamilton, Alexander, *A New Account of the East Indies, Being the Observations and Remarks of Captain Alexander Hamilton, 1688-1723*, ed. Sir William Foster, London, 1739, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1995, Vol. I, p. 157, Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p.52.

[139] *Ibid.*

[140] *Ibid.* p. 64, Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

like sati and *purdah* had attracted the attention of the foreigners mainly. There accounts contain full of references of sati and *purdah*. Besides, some other evil prevalent in the Indian society of that time find scattered references in traveler's account.

The word *sati* is a *Sanskrit* word which means *"a true wife"* and the term was properly applied to a woman whose faithful devotion to her husband, during his lifetime, earned for her this well-deserved title of praise.

The practice of burning widows in the funeral pyre of their husbands prevailed throughout the period under study. It attracted the attention of almost everyone who was a stranger to the country. However it was not a new thing in India. This inhuman practice of widow-burning was an ancient custom and a Hindu woman was bound to burn herself alive with the corpse of her husband to honour him.[141] About Sati, when one asks the widow the cause of it, they say it is the custom, they pretend it was always so in the Indies, and so they hide their cruel jealousies under the veil of antiquity.[142] The prevalence of *sati* system during the 16th century is well described by the Portuguese and Italian travellers who visited Southern India. It gained a wide currency in the Mughal Empire also and became more or less obligatory in nature. Almost every contemporary foreign traveller invariably refer to it, with all its rituals, and some of them even speak about the element of compulsion attached to it, which was normally exercised by the Brahman priests.[143]

Ralph Fitch refers to Sati thus, *"And when the husband dies, his wife if she be alive is buried with him, if she will not, her head is shaven and then is never any account made of her after".*[144] De Laet says, *"When her husband dies, the widow of her own free will, leaps upon his pyre and is burnt up together with his corpse, as is a well-known fact".*[145] Here, we found a reference to the voluntary or optional nature of this practice. Pelsaert observes, *"when a Rajput dies, his wives (or rather his wife, for, they marry only one if there is genuine love) allow themselves to be burnt alive, as is the practice among the Banian and Kashtryia, and in Agra this commonly occurs two or three times a week."*[146]

---

[141] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 213.
[142] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
[143] Bernier, *op. cit.* p. 313, Careri, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-250, also refer to *Ain*, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 355 for the element of compulsion in sati.
[144] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, pp.14-15.
[145] De Laet, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
[146] Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

Bernier describes it in great details with a particular reference to the part played by the Brahman priests.[147] He writes, *"It is true, however that I have known some of these unhappy widows shrink at the sight of the piled wood so as to leave no doubt in my mind that they would willingly have recanted, if recanataion had been permitted by the merciless Brahmin's."*[148] He tries to examine the root cause of the popularity of this practice, in those days, and says, "Many persons whom I then consulted on the subject would have persuaded me that excess of affection was the root cause why these women burn themselves with their deceased husbands; but I soon found that this abominable practice is the effect of early and deeply rooted prejudices. Every girl is taught by her mother that it is virtuous and laudable in a wife to mingle her ashes with those of her husband, and no woman of honour will refuse compliance with the established custom."[149]

Manucci also refers to sati in details[150] and he cites the cases of forced sati at Agra[151] and Rajmahal.[152] Thevenot[153] and Careri[154] also refer in details to cases of forced Sati as well as to the ceremonies attached to this practice and they too put the larger share of the blame upon the Brahmins. The rites associated with Sati were differently performed according to the economic position of the woman's family. There was no feasting and rejoicing if the widow belonged to a low caste and was a poor.[155] But if she is a woman of high rank and rich then the ceremony was performed with much pomp and show like a festival.[156]

Amongst the poor peoples in Vijayanagara the Sati was performed by burying alive with the husband and when the wall is as high as necks, woman was strangled; the workmen finish the wall over their heads so they lied buried together.[157]

In Vijayanagara the practice of Sati was so customary that it was held with great honour when the King dies four or five hundred women burn themselves with

---

[147] Bernier, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-315
[148] *Ibid.* p. 313.
[149] *Ibid.* pp. 310-11.
[150] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 60.
[151] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 97
[152] *Ibid.* Vol. III.
[153] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, pp.119-120.
[154] Careri, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-250 and 255.
[155] Barbosa, *op. cit.*,Vol. I, p. 214.
[156] *Ibid.* Vol.I, pp. 214-216, Purchas, *op. cit.*, Vol. X, pp. 95-96, Varthema, Ludovico Di, *The Itinerary of Ludovico Di Varthema of Bologna from 1502 to 1508*, English tr. John Winter Jones, 1863, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi (rpt. 1997), p. 77.
[157] Purchas, *op. cit.*, Vol. X, p. 96.

the King.[158] Some of the women throw themselves with the corpse of the King while others with the ceremonies.[159] Many intimates were also burnt with him."[160] When a great man died in Vijayanagara he was burnt with his wife and with all his slaves with whom the great man had *"Carnall Copulation"*.[161] Jourdain also gives the same detail about the burial of a great man at Mandu the reason cited by him for the burning of wives and slaves is to serve the dead man in another world.[162]

Thus in the fact of evidences, it can safely be asserted that sati was obligatory in some parts of India and in certain cases force accompanied it, though in some parts e.g., in Rajputana, ladies burnt themselves more willingly than in other parts of India. Although the practice was more or less prevalent in almost all parts of Mughal India, the main homes of it were, however the Ganges Valley, the Punjab and Rajputana in the North, and Madura and Vijayanagara in the South. In Bengal the rite of Sati became widely prevalent at least from the 12th century.[163]

Mandelso relates a case of *sati* which occurred at Cambay. Thomas Bowrey also records a case of sati at Chromandel along with a picture with the captain, *"the widow burneth alive"*.[164] Fryer even suspects that a widow's kinsmen drugged her with *dutura*, *"when half mad she throws herself into the fire"*.

Humayun took a bold step against *sati* and tried to extirpate it together. He extended an absolute prohibition to all cases where a widow was past the age of child bearing even if she offered herself willingly. Curiously enough the Hindu prince made no violent protest or demonstrates against this. The ordinary rule in the system of official permit for burning a widow however remained in force. The officers of the Padishah were present on such occasion to prevent any act of violence.[165]

Akbar endeavored to prevent forceful sati in his Kingdom. His edict banning sati runs thus; 'If a Hindu woman wished to be burnt with husband, and then should

---

[158] Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 216.
[159] *Ibid.*
[160] *Ibid.* Vol. I, p. 217.
[161] Purchas, *op. cit.*, Vol. X, p. 96.
[162] Jourdain, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
[163] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 406.
[164] Bowrey, Thomas, *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal, 1669-1679*, ed., R.C. Temple, Hakluyt Society, Cambridge, 1905, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1993, p. 14.
[165] Reis, Sidi Ali, *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Sidi Ali Reis in India, Afghanistan, Central Asia and Persia, During the Years 1553-1556*, English tr. and ed., Arminius Vambery, Luzac & Co. Publishers to the India Office, London, 1899, p. 60.

not prevent her, but she should not be forced against her will.[166] Vigilant and ruthful men had been appointed in every city and district to prevent the forcible burning.[167] It is difficult to infer that he pursued a general policy of total prohibition of sati though the Hindu widow could not immolate herself without the formal sanction of the governor, but the latter could only advice and delay his decision; if the woman remained firm he was bound to grant the remission.[168]

Jahangir went even a step further of his father. In *Tuzuk*-i-*Jahangiri*, we find an order which not only prohibited sati and infanticide but even enjoined punishment for its infraction.[169] But it was never strictly enforced. The governors were not permitted by king's order to refuse permission. Yet they endeavored by various means; sometimes even by offer of 'enticing promises' to prevent self-immolation by widows but in most cases only in vain.[170] Even Jahangir himself was reluctantly compelled to give leave for burning a widow in Agra.[171]

Shahjahan faithfully pursued the policy of his predecessors towards sati. "The Mughal hath almost abolished that custom so that it may not be done without special license from the King or governors of the place where they dwelt".[172] These governors being a Mahumetan and abhorring that execrable custom of self murder is very shy to permit them.[173] Shahjahan is even credited with prohibiting women with children from burning themselves; such women were commanded to live for the education of their children.[174]

Aurangzeb issued an order after his return from Kashmir in 1663 prohibiting totally the sacrifice of widows in the Mughal Empire.[175] Despite this order Aurangzeb hardly succeeded in suppressing sati altogether. Yet this much is certain that through orders to his governors to employ all their case in suppressing the abuse, he made the performance of sati difficult and thus saved a great many living woman from the pyre. Both Thevenot and Careri testify the strong vigilance employed by his governor to

---

[166] Badaoni, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 338.
[167] Fazl, Abul, *Akbar Nama*, English tr. H. Beveridge, Ess Ess Publications, First published, 1897-1921, rpt., Delhi, 1973-87, Vol. III, p. 595.
[168] Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
[169] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 79.
[170] *Ibid.*
[171] *Ibid.* pp. 220-221.
[172] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 35.
[173] Travernier, *op. cit.*, p. 407.
[174] *Ibid.*
[175] Manucci, *op.cit*, Vol. II, p. 97, J. N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, M. C. Sarkar and Sons, Calcutta, 1973.Vol. II, p. 104.

prevent the large scale slaughter of woman at the altar of their dead husband.[176] On the whole, it can be safely asserted that the mughal emperors and their officers viewed the right of sati with unconcealed disfavor and tried their best to prevent it by persuasion if possible. The practice of sati was checked to a great extent under the Mughal by indirect means, but at the same time it is true that sometimes the eager aspirants to sati and their relatives would buy off the permission from the governors and other authorities with costly present's ready money and great solicitation.[177] Still it can be maintained that the earnest vigilance of the mughal emperors and their officers succeeded in reducing the number of sati during the mughal rule, a fact loudly proclaimed by most of the travellers of the period.[178]

The practice of widow burning was condemned by the travellers and is quite ocular when they calls it *'beastly deed',*[179] *'hellish sacrifice',*[180] *'barbaric inhumanity'.*[181] Abbe Carre goes to the extent of referring sati as the *'widow lands in hell'.*[182]

Europeans travellers have recorded that women in India, especially the Muslim women, observed strict *purdah*. English traveller, J. Ovington wrote that "all the Women of Fashion in India are close penn'd in by their jealous Husbands, who forbid them the very sight of all Strangers. However the Watch is neither so careful,nor their Modesty so blameless, but that they sometimes will look abroad for Variety, as well as their roving Husbands do."[183] Manucci contended that "the Mahomedans are very touchy in the matter of allowing their women to be seen, or even touched by the hand; above all, the lady being of the blood royal, it could not be done without express permission from the king."[184] *Purdah* was no less strictly observed among Muslim ladies of other classes. Careri observed that "The

---

[176] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, pp. 120, 250.
[177] Tavernier, *op. cit.*, p. 407, Thevenot, *op. cit.*, pp. 120, 211, 250, Ovington, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-202.
[178] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 306, Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 201, Thevenot, *op. cit.*, pp. 120, 250, Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
[179] Purchas, *op. cit.*, Vol. X, p. 94.
[180] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 323.
[181] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 232, Bowrey, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
[182] Carre Abbe, *The Travels of Abbe Carre in India and the Near East, 1672-74*, English tr. & ed., Lady Fawcett & Charles Fawcett, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1990, Vol. II, p. 507.
[183] Ovington, *op. cit.*, 127.
[184] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 195. He even records that he had seen that if a house caught fire, women preferred to be burnt alive "than merely to expose themselves to the view of strangers." (Vol. III, p. 259).

Maohammedan women did not appear in public, except only the vulgar sort and the leud ones."[185]

Manucci has observed that "the chief doors of the *mahal* are closed at sunset, and the principal door of all is guarded by good sentinels posted for the purpose, and a seal is attached. Torches are kept burning all night."[186] The women of the *harem* were "all closely guarded, not visible to any, but (to the King) himself".[187] As *harem* was a no-go area for the men except for the king and close relatives, the Europeans found it difficult, rather impossible, to give an authentic firsthand account of its inmates. Italian adventurer, Pietro Della Valle, conceded its failure to describe the female apartments of the Mughal King. He wrote: "What 'tis with inside I know not, for I enter'd not into it..."[188] Mundy also wrote that mahal was the place "where his weomen are kept, and where noe man enters but himself, having Euenuches to looke to them."[189] Thomas Roe wrote: "No man enters his house but eunuchs; his women are never seene...."[190] Edward Terry, chaplain to Thomas Roe, related that as "there lodge none in the King's house but his women and eunuchs, and some little boyes which hee keeps about him for a wicked use.[191] Francois Bernier, in spite of his twelve years' service with Mughal nobles, omitted the *harem* in his description of the fort at Delhi. He frankly admitted that "I wish I could lead you about in the *Seraglio*, as I have done in the rest of the Fortress: but who is the Traveller that can speak of that as an eye-witness?"[192]

Some European travellers also took notice of the mode of travelling of Indian women in *purdah*. While describing the march of Roshanara Begum with her retinue, Manucci graphically described that "they seemed so many ghosts or spirits of the abyss, you could not tell if they were handsome or ugly, old or young, men or women; for, let alone the face, you could not see even the tips of their toes." He related that in front of the Princess's elephant, there marched "a number of bold and aggressive men on foot to drive away everybody, noble or pauper, with blows from sticks and

---

[185] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 248.
[186] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 328.
[187] Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
[188] Della Valle, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 98.
[189] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol II, p. 201.
[190] Roe, *op. cit.*, p. 270.
[191] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 311.
[192] Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 49-50.

pushes."[193] Mundy also figuratively described that before and after the women's chandowlies and palanquins, there walked "Capons (eunuchs) or gelded men on horseback, besides a guarde of Gunners, suffering none to approach anything neere them."[194] Manucci has also refuted the story told by Bernier that "he managed one day to go near enough to see a women servant whisking away the flies from Roshan Ara Begam."

For Manucci, this was "impossibility" because "the princess and nobles' wives are shut up in such a manner that they cannot be seen, although they can observe the passers-by."[195] In the opinion of Thomas Roe, the Muslims were so strict in their observance of *purdah* that a fight would ensue if "a stranger by force (was) to open in the streets the close chayres (i.e. doolies) wherein their weomen are carried (which they take for a dishonour equall to ravishment)?"[196] According to John Fryer, "When they (Muslim women) go abroad, they are carried in close *Palenkeens*, which if a Man offer to unveil it is present death; the meanest of them not permitting their Women to stir out uncovered; of whom they are allowed as many as they can keep..."[197] German traveller John Albert de Mandelslo, Manucci, Bernier, Thevenot and Careri have also frequently mentioned that like royal ladies, the women of the noble families both among the Hindus and the Muslims, went out of their houses well-guarded in properly covered palanquins surrounded on all sides by servants and eunuchs.[198]

European travellers have advanced a number of reasons for observance of *purdah* but for most of them, the real cause was the men's jealousy of other men and their distrust of their womanfolk. John Fryer wrote that "The *Moors* are by Nature plagued with Jealousy, cloistering their Wives up, and sequestering them the sight of any besides the *Capon* that watches them."[199] Manucci contended that "the reason is that Mahomedans are most extraordinary distrustful upon this chapter; and what deserves mention is that some do not even trust their own brothers, and do not permit their women to appear before them, being jealous of them."[200]

---

[193] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 66-67.
[194] Mundy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 191-192.
[195] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 66-67.
[196] Roe, *op. cit.*, p. 327.
[197] Fryer, *op. cit.*, Vol I, p. 181.
[198] Mandelslo, *op. cit.*, p. 51, Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 372, Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
[199] Fryer, *op. cit.*, Vol I, p. 181.
[200] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 329.

Despite the practice of strict *purdah*, the Europeans never concealed their wish to have a glimpse of Indian women. Roe related the incident how he saw two wives of the emperor watching him while standing in a window over which "a grate of reede" having "little holes" was hung. He himself first saw their fingers, then their eyes and sometimes "full proportion." Their complexion was fair and they had "smoothed up" black hair. Their diamonds and pearls shed enough light to "show them." They "were so merry" that they must have "laughed at me."[201] Roe was able to have a glimpse but Hawkins could only lament that "there are likewise private rooms made for his Queenes, most rich, where they sit and see all, but are not seene."[202] The same thing happened to the second English ambassador to the Mughal court, William Norris. The latter met on the road the daughter of the Governor of Surat. She herself was in a closed *palanquin*. According to Norris, "she pulled up ye side to looke out", but he could "discover neither her face nor dresse."[203]

Fryer, who was official surgeon of the East India Company, went inside the *harem* to see an ailing lady. As was the normal routine, he was to feel the pulse of the patient from behind a curtain. But the curtain accidently fell down. Fryer described the incident as if the door of an animal cage stood opened. He discovered "the whole Bevy, fluttering like so many Birds when a Net is cast over them; yet none of them sought to escape." He found them altogether busy in "good Housewifery such as "Needlework" or making "confection" or "*Achars*" (Pickles) with "no indecent decorum in managing their Cloystered way of living."[204] It was a great opportunity for Fryer to directly observe the women of the *harem* and their living conditions. However, what he was able to see was that the women were employed in just normal routine household work. It was a disappointment for Fryer and his readers who expected a place of debauchery which was a stereo-typed image of *harem*, popular in the west. He, therefore, referred immediately to Odyssey and tried to prove the wickedness of women who "are incontinent in their Desires, for which reason they debar them the sight of anything Male, but their Lord."[205]

---

[201] Roe, *op. cit.*, 282-283.
[202] *Early Travels in India, op. cit.*, p. 118.
[203] Norris, *op. cit.*, p. 241.
[204] Fryer, *op. cit.*, Vol I, pp. 347-48.
[205] *Ibid.*

European travellers believed that this custom of observing purdah negatively affected the women's minds. For Manucci, the harem life meant a veritable prison with its own drudgery and monotony.[206] He contended that "the women, being shut up with this closeness and constantly watched, and having neither liberty nor occupation, think of nothing but adorning themselves and their minds dwell on nothing but malice and lewdness." He has also told the readers that once the wife of Asad Khan, the *wazir*, confessed that "her only thoughts were to imagine something by which she could please her husband and hinder his going near other women."

Purdah is generally considered as an Islamic institution. But we have sufficient references in history that confirms the maintenance of *purdah* by the women of Hindu upper and well-to-do classes. Actually people of that period were very particular about the chastity of women. The women themselves were much concerned about their chastity during that period. Lower class women living in the countryside could not have afforded to observe the rules of *purdah* or to remain in seclusion with the same rigidity as their sisters belonging to the upper classes of society as they had to work outside for their maintenance.

The Muslim women observed *purdah* with greater rigidity than the Hindu ones. "The Mohammedan women do not come out into public unless they are poor or immodest; they veil their heads and draw their hair forward in a knot from the back."[207] Manucci refers to the fact that *purdah* was more strictly observed among the Moslems than among the Hindus.[208] He further mention, "Among the Mohammedans it was a great dishonor for a family when a wife is compelled to uncover herself."[209] Thevenot referring to *purdah* among the Muslim women writes, "If these Indian women be idolators they go barefaced and if Mohametans, they are veiled."[210] Careri observes, "The Mohametan women do not appear in public, except only the vulgar sort and the leud ones. They cover their heads but their hair hangs down behind in several tresses."[211]

---

[206] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol II, p. 348-49.
[207] De Laet, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
[208] Manucci, *op. cit.*, Vol I, p. 62. In this connection, Manucci while referring to the women of Surat writes, "The latter, mostly Hindus, do not conceal the face as in Persia and Turkey, where women go about with their faces hidden.
[209] *Ibid.* Vol. II, p. 175.
[210] Thevenot, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
[211] Careri, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

CONCLUSION

The *travelogues* are useful source of information for the period under study. This genre of unofficial historical writing has its own importance even surrounded by much criticism; it is profusely used by the modern historians in corroborating the facts. It sheds light on social customs and institutions, religious practices and beliefs, trade industry and commerce and the economic condition of the people.

Travellers like Duarte Barbosa, Varthema, Nuniz and Paes has given a very interesting description of southern India especially of Vijayanagara Empire covering a wide range from king to common masses during the early 16th century. Northern India was also visited by a horde of travellers such as Sir Thomas Roe, William Hawkins, Edward Terry, Bernier and Manucci; who were in close touch with the Mughal Court and they furnish us with detailed information about the court life, festivals and ceremonial functions. Others travellers like Ovington, Thevenot, Careri wrote much on common masses. These travellers recorded the minutest details of Indian social-cultural and economic life.

Analysing the vast mass of material provided by the travellers leads to the conclusion that a common civilization sprang up in the greater part of the country during the 16th and 17th centuries. The establishment of a strong central government under the Mughals gave peace to the country. This peaceful atmosphere enabled the people to evolve a common outlook upon life which brought about homogeneity in social and spiritual ideals and in art and literature.

The Hindus and Muslims lived together with perfect peace and harmony. There was no serious religious strife or communal disturbances in India except that of some trivial bitterness between the *Shias* and *Sunnis*. The Hindus and Muslims both adopted the customs and manners of each other. They celebrated their fairs and festivals in the same manner. In the courts of the monarchs some of the Hindu festivals such as *Diwali* and *Rakshabandhan* were celebrated with the same enthusiasm as the two *Ids* and *Shab-i-Barat*. This gave a very healthy influence on the population.

Most of the ceremonies performed by the Hindus and Muslims were same such as at the child-birth and beginning education were identical. The pastimes and

amusements were similar for the whole period. In their household affairs, dresses, ornaments, arms, and in other details of their living, it was difficult to distinguish the one from the other. Even they observed common superstitions and beliefs except that of the religious ones.

The educational-system remained organized on the traditional lines. The Muslims and Hindus had a common system of education. They studied side by side in the same *maktabs* and *madarsas* under a common teacher. The primary education was given in these *madarsas*, attached with the mosques. *Persian* being the official language was learnt by most of the Hindus to get employed in mughal administration. J. N. Sarkar writes, "All the twenty Indian Subahs of the Mughal Empire were governed by exactly the same administrative machinery, with exactly the same procedure, and official titles. Persian was the one language in all official records etc... officials and soldiers were frequently transferred from one province to another. Thus, the native of one province felt himself almost at home in another province, traders and travellers passed most easily from city to city, *subah* to *subah*, and all realized the imperial oneness of this vast country". After learning Persian the higher education was imparted in *colleges*.

The Muslims learnt *Hindi* and some of them studied *Sanskrit* also. The *Vedas*, *upanishads* and several other Hindu religious and philosophical works were translated into *Persian*. Dara Shikoh and Jahanara Begum studied such works with great curiosity and interest. The Muslims also contributed in the enrichment of the *Hindi*, *Bengali* and *Punjabi* languages and literatures.

During the sixteenth and the seventeenth century the condition of women was not much different as it prevailed in early medieval period but with a minor alteration only. Many social reforms were undertaken such as the abolition of *child-marriage* and *sati* for raising the status of women in society.

The royal ladies enjoyed special privileges and were held in high esteem. They were also given proper honour and respect. Some of them kept themselves involved in mercantile activities, court politics and even in state welfare works. The royal ladies held this place because of their personal achievements and ability sometimes. The position of the women of the nobility was just the copy of the royalty.

In spite of the many privileges enjoyed by the ladies of the aristocratic and nobility class their life was also not free from some of the evil practices in the society like polygamy and *purdah*.

Purdah or veiling of women was a common practice among the Muslims, and it was also adopted by Hindu women after the advent of the Muslims. This system was particularly prevalent among affluent families of both communities, as it came to be associated as an elitist practice. In fact *purdah* was the most strictly observed by the royal ladies and higher class women. Polygamy was common among the Muslims while Hindus mostly practiced monogamy; but Hindu rulers were an exception to this rule.

On the other hand, the foreign travellers observed the social custom and practices that had a direct bearing on the place of middle-class and common women that relegated them (women) to the background. The social malpractices like the child marriage, infanticide, *sati*, *jauhar*, dowry, divorce, remarriage, female slavery that included concubinage and dancing girls are fearlessly revealed in the travelogues. Their professional life played an important role in the non-prevalence of *purdah* system among the lower class.

In south India women enjoyed a better position as compared to their northern counterparts. They participated keenly in social, political and literary activities of the time. There were also women wrestlers, astrologers and clerks who were well-educated and experienced in state business.

Yet, the Vijayanagar society was not free from the social evils of child-marriage, the dowry system and the frequent practice of *sati*. Polygamy was not uncommon and even visits to brothels were considered to be fairly normal, unattached with any social stigma. Sometimes women of pleasure accompanied the army and accomplished courtesans often enjoyed special favours from the kings.

In the economic sphere the account left by the travellers is of prime importance. They give ample and reliable information about agricultural crops, minerals, industries, trade and commerce. People lived mostly in self-sufficient villages forming a unit. They produced all the necessities of life such as food and clothes for their own use. The cultivators grew different kinds of crops and the craftsmen manufactured all kinds of goods.

At the height of empire in the seventeenth century, the use of money, the cultivation of commercial crops and the production of manufactured goods had all become more widespread. The intensification of monetization and commercialization meant that even peasants were now enmeshed in economic relationships that extended considerably beyond their villages.

Commercial activity was not only intruding deeper and deeper into local agrarian economies, it was also operating in more expansive networks across the subcontinent as the Mughal Empire grew in size. Cash and credit, a wide range of goods and even people circulated on a much larger scale during the seventeenth century than in earlier times. As a consequence, all kinds of merchants, the small village moneylender, the urban shopkeeper, the long-distance trader, and the merchant-banker flourished.

Growing monetization and the expansion of economic networks were partly an outcome of the needs of the Mughal state. Revenues extracted from the hinterland typically in the form of cash, had to be dispatched to the capital, while funds for military campaigns or specialized goods had to be sent out to the provinces. This process could cumbersome, as in the early seventeenth century when Bengal's revenues were physically transported to the Imperial heartland in a convoy of bullock-carts. A better means of remitting money from one place to another was soon developed, the *hundi* or bill of exchange.

The relative ease of travel and exchange over long distances also stimulated the expansion of economic networks in the seventeenth century. Even bulky raw materials and foodstuffs were circulated from one end of the empire to another. Rice, sugar and oil from Bengal for instance were sent inlands along the Ganges River to Agra and also down the eastern coast to the Coromandel. In its return, Bengal imported large quantities of salt from Rajasthan. Artisans in certain areas came to depend largely on supplies from distant regions. Bengal was the source of most of the raw silk used by Gujarat's important silk textile industry, while Coromandel weavers relied heavily on raw cotton from the western Deccan. High and luxury items like precious stones and finely worked metal ware were widely coveted and distributed.

People too had to travel to far-off places to procure goods for business deals and needed safe accommodations while away from their homes. A large city like Agra had as many as sixty rest-houses or *serais* for travellers according to Jean Thevenot.

It is significant to note that industries were in a highly flourishing state in those days. The manufacture of textiles was the biggest industry in the country. Besides textiles, metallurgy, diamond cutting and the saltpeter, ceramics reached the highest stage of artistic development. Indian manufactured goods were exported to Western Asia and to the countries of Europe, and it was the prospect of a lucrative trade in these goods that attracted the European merchants to India during this period. Imports were almost negligible as India was self-sufficient.

During early sixteenth-century the economy the Vijayanagara also flourished due to the resultant agrarian surplus along with the development of industry. Travellers describe the capital of Vijayanagara as the 'best provided city in the world'. The Vijayanagara rulers prompted mining of metals and diamonds, built craft-guilds and encouraged their subjects to produce the best of fabrics and perfumes. They patronized Hindu religion and made extensive developments in the field of architecture through the construction of impressive temples and monuments. With the battle of *Talikota* in 1564 A.D., the glory of Vijayanagara finally came to an end.

So it is safe to conclude that while the affluent sections of society were rich and prosperous from their income from agriculture, trade and manufacture. The standard of living of common masses was low but they were contended as foodstuffs and other basic needs were available in abundance; also at very cheap prices. The conditions of common masses were not so bad except during dislocation either caused by war or by some natural calamity.

Appendix-I

S. No.	Name	Country	Year
1	Ludovico de Varthema	Italy	1502-1508
2	Duarte Barbosa	Portugal	1516-1518
3	Domingo Paes	Portugal	1520-1522
4	Fernao Nuniz	Portugal	1535-1537
5	Cesare Federici	Italy	1530-1600
6	John Huyghen Van Linschoten	Holland	1583
7	Ralph Fitch	England	1583
8	William Finch	England	Early Seventeenth Century
9	William Hawkins	"	"
10	Nicholas Withington	"	"
11	Thomas Roe	"	"
12	Tomas Coryat	"	"
13	Edward Terry	"	"
14	John Jourdain	"	"
15	Thomas Best	"	"
16	Nicholas Downtown	"	"
17	Pyard De Laval	France	"
18	Pietro Della Valle	Italy	"
19	Francois Pelsaert	Holland	"
20	Mahmud bin Amir Wali Balkhi	Afghanistan	"
21	Peter Mundy	England	Shahjahan
22	Thomas Herbert	"	"

23	Henry Lord	"	"
24	Jean-Baptiste Tavernier	France	"
25	Francois Bernier	"	"
26	John Albert De Mandelslo	Germany	"
27	Niccolao Manucci	Italy	"
28	Fray Sebastien Manrique	Portugal	"
29	Friar Domingo Navarrate	Spain	"
30	John Fryer	England	Aurangzeb
31	John Marshall	"	"
32	John Ovington	"	"
33	William Norris	"	"
34	Thomas Bowrey	"	"
35	Streynsham Master	"	"
36	William Hedges	"	"
37	Alexander Hamilton	"	"
38	Jean de Thevenot	France	"
39	Abbe Carre	"	"
40	Francois Martin	"	"
41	J. F. Gemelli Careri	"	"

List of Foreign Travellers who visited during 16th and 17th in India.

Appendix-II

S. No.	Months	Number of days	Festivals	Dates
1.	*Muharram*	30	*Muharram*	1st to 10th
2.	*Saphar*	29		
3.	*Rabi-ul-awwal*	30	*Bara Wafat*	12th
4.	*Rabi-ul-sani*	29	*Husain's Birthday*	
5.	*Jamada-ul-awwal*	30		
6.	*Jamada-ul-sani*	29		
7.	*Rajab*	30	*Day of Victory*	15th
			Prophet's ascension	20th
8.	*Shaban*	29	*Shab-i-Barat*	14th
9.	*Ramazaan*	30	*Fast of Ramazaan*	1st to 30th
10.	*Shawwul*	29	*Id-ul-Fitr*	1st or day after new moon is seen
11.	*Dhul-qada (Zul-qad)*	30		
12.	*Dhul-hija (Zil-haj)*	29 or 30	*Bakr-Id or Id-ul-Zuha*	10th

Name of Muslim Festivals.

Birth of a prince, astrologers at work. Museum of fine Arts, Boston, (Acc. No.17.3112).

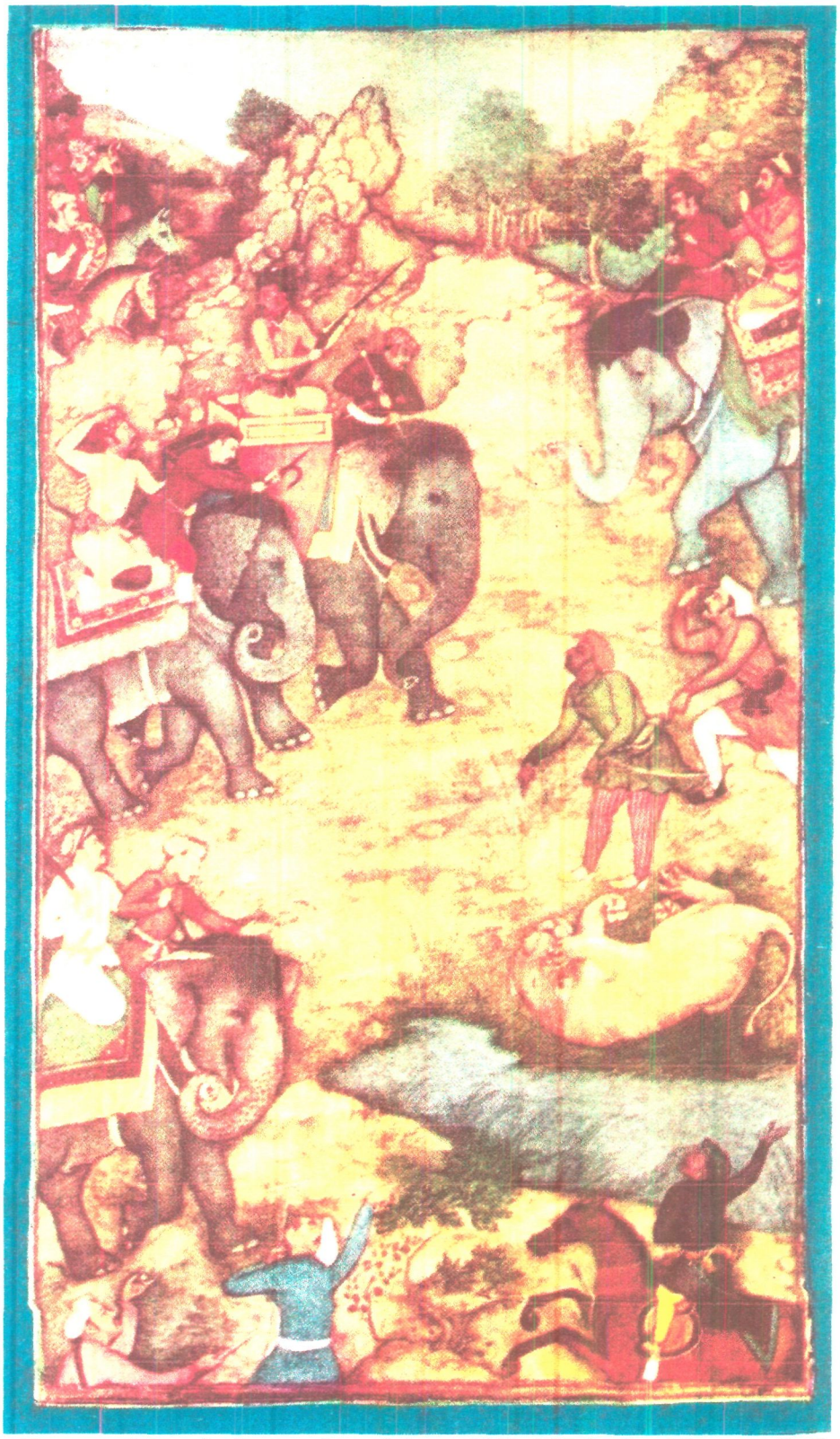
Plate-I

Singers on village road. c. 1620 A.D. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, IM. 27-1925.

Plate-II

Akbar hunting in an enclosure. *Akbarnama*, c. 1590, in Victoria and Albert Museum, London, IS 2-1896 56/117.

Plate-III



The Emperor Jahangir shoots a large loin. c. 1623 A.D, Indian Museum, Kolkata, No. 316.

Plate-IV

Akbar hunts with trained *cheetah*. *Akbarnama*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, I.S. 2/1896 Acc. No. 92/117.

Plate-V

Elephant, camel-fights and wrestling, Babur's garden party at Agra, c. 1589 A.D., Victoria and Albert Museum, London, IM 275-1913.

Plate-VI

Dara Shikoh viewing acrobatics, Shahjahan's period, c.1640-50, Acc.no.52.32, National Museum, New Delhi.

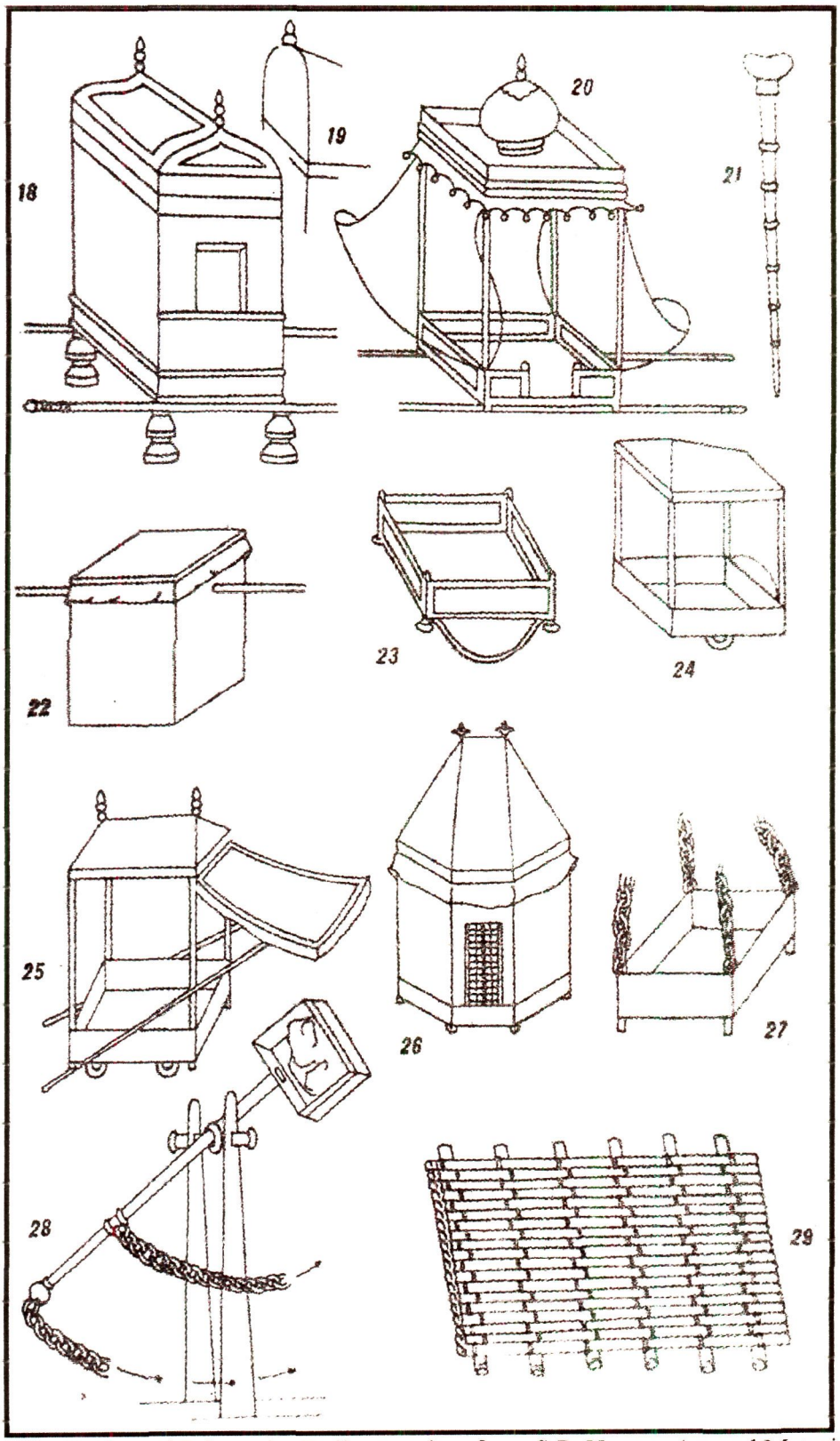
Plate-VII

The emperor Jahangir celebrating the festival of *Ab-pashi*, or sprinkling of rose-water.
Raza Library, Rampur.

Plate-VIII

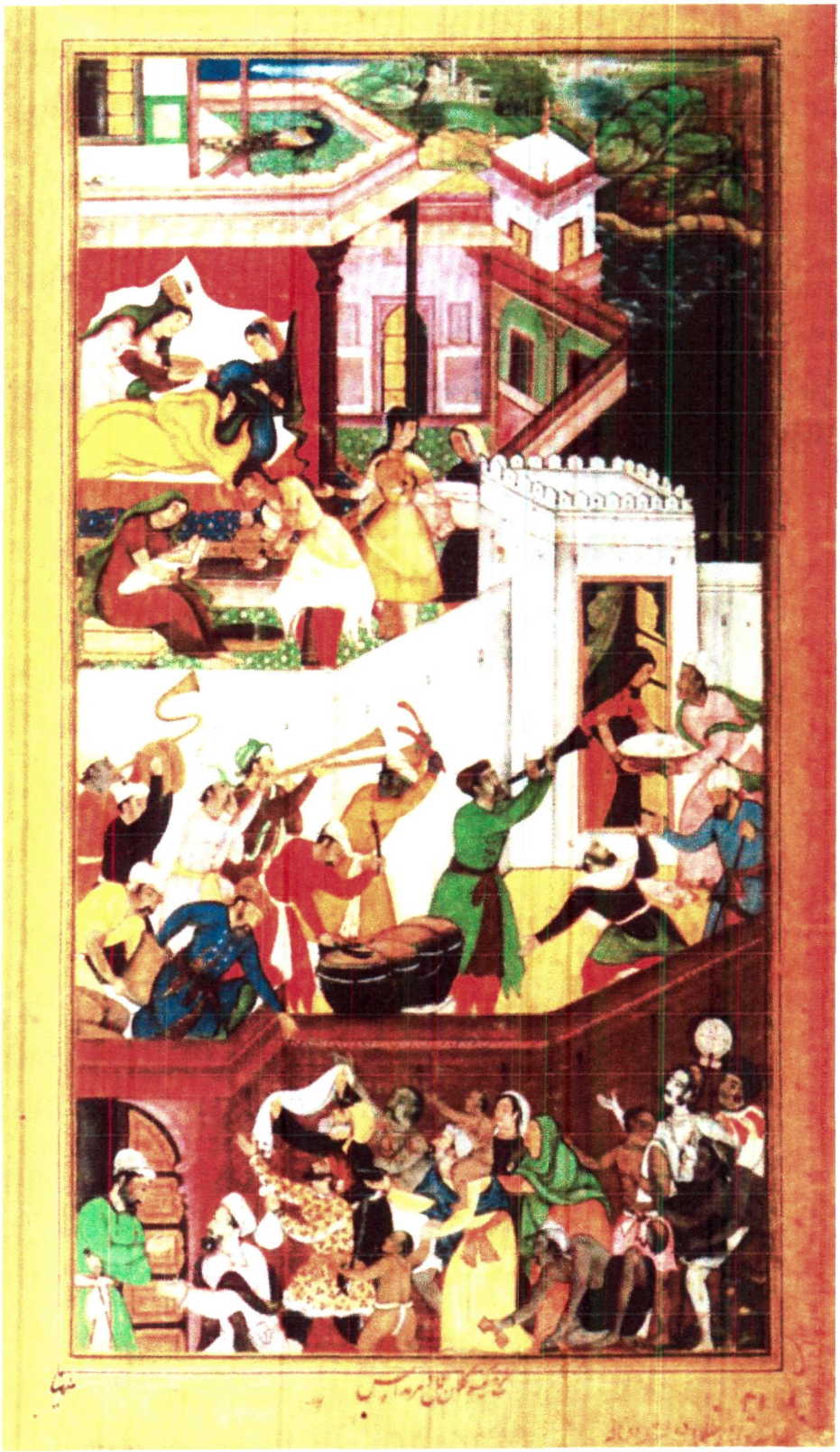
Jahangir playing Holi, c. 1615-1625 A.D. A page from Minto Album, Cheaster Beatty Library, Dublin.

Plate-IX



Representation of Palanquin, Doli, etc. taken from S.P. Verma: Art and Material Culture, Plate LXIX.

Plate-X

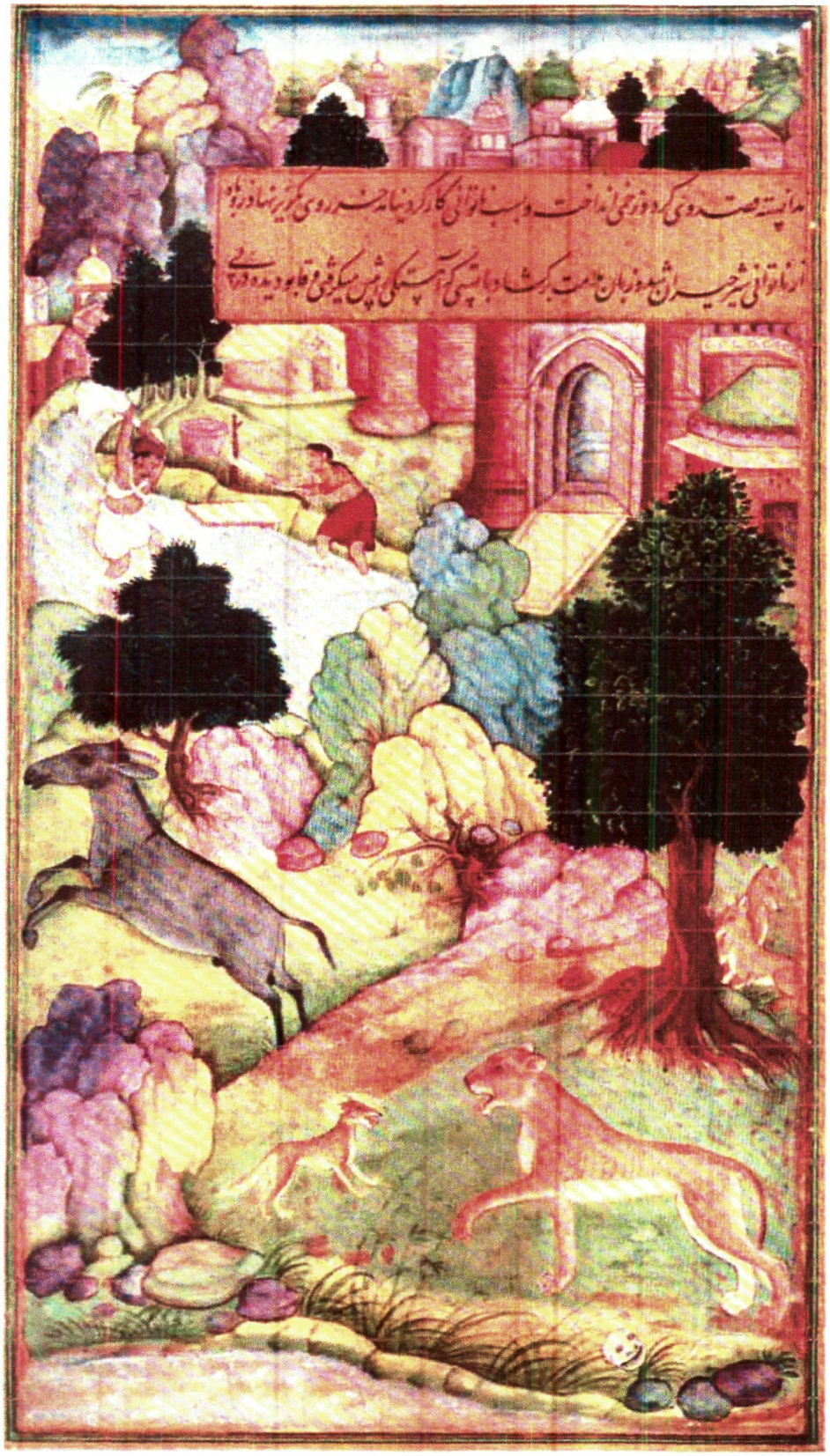


Rejoicing on the birth of Salim at Fatehpur. *Akbarnama*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. I.S. 2/1896 Acc. no. 78/117.

Plate-XI

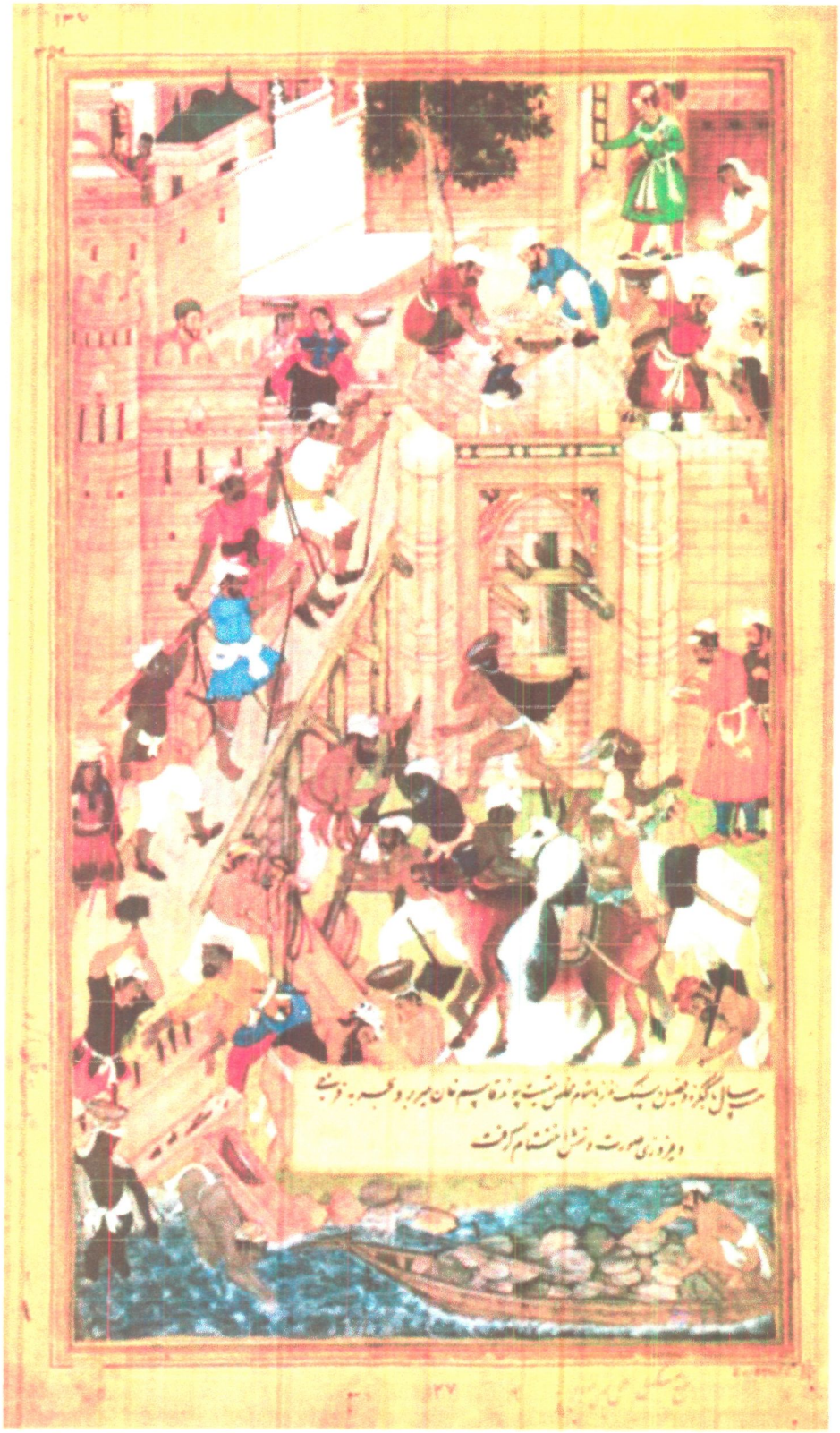
Bird-trappers, fisherman, village men and woman at work. *Anwar-i Suhaili,* c. 1597 A.D., Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi. Acc. no. 9069 folio 11.

Plate- XII



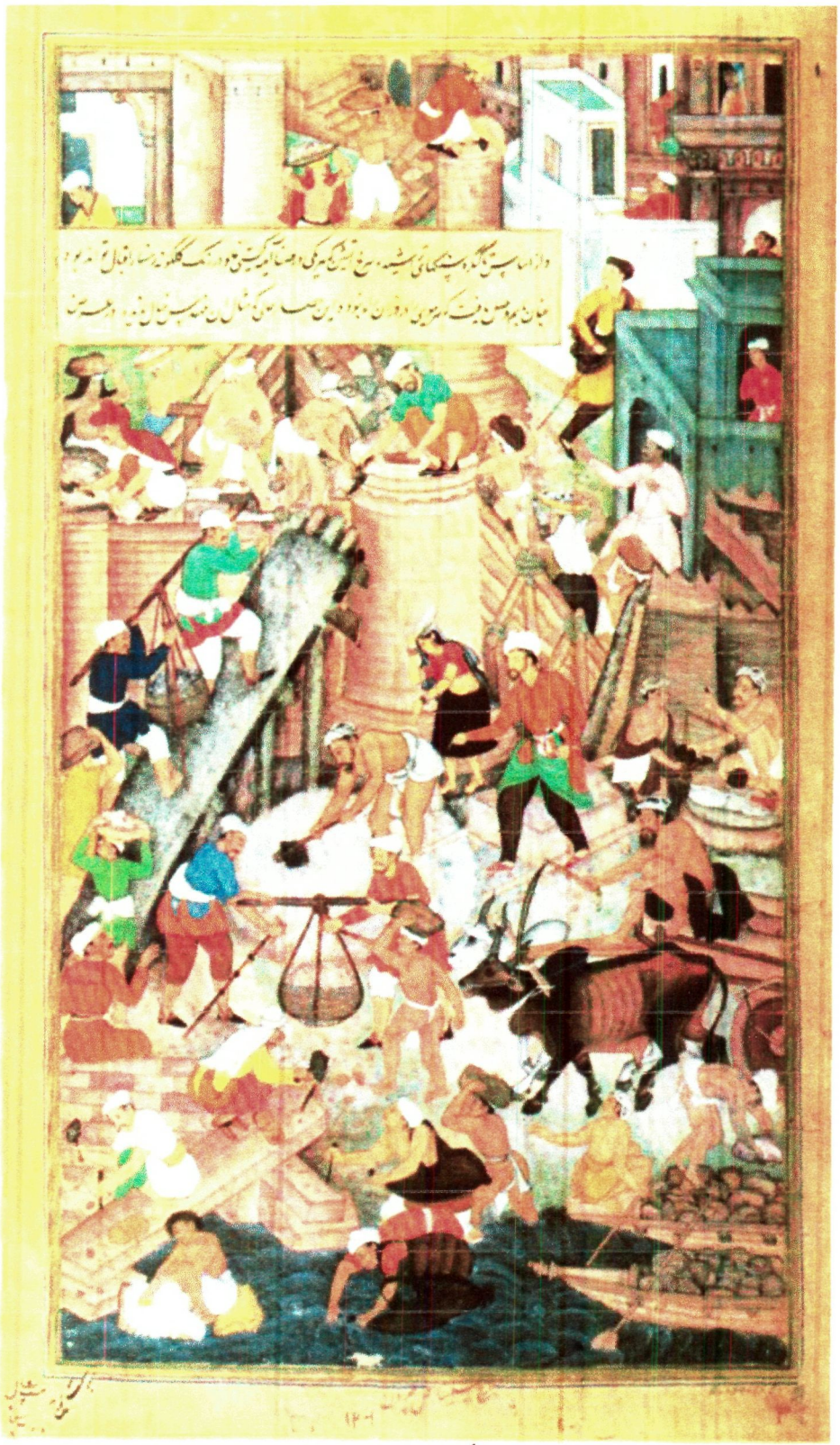
Washerman and his wife. *Anwar-i Suhaili* c. 1597 A.D., Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, Acc. no. 9069/19.

Plate-XIII



Workmen, building construction at Agra. A double- page illustration, *Akbarnama,* Victoria and Albert Museum, London, I.S. 2 / 1896 double page, Acc. No. 45/117.

Plate-XIV



Workmen, building construction at Agra. 2nd half of double- page illustration, *Akbarnma,* Victoria and Albert Museum, London, I.S. 2. 1896, Acc. No. 46/117: Masons, stone-cutter, water-carriers, women-labourers, sailors, hawkers, etc.

Plate-XV

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES:

Abul Fazl : *Ain-i-Akbari,* English tr. Blochmann, revised by Phillot Vol. I (reprint-first published, 1927), Calcutta, 1965; H.S. Jarrett, revised by J. N. Sarkar, Vol. II & III (2nd edition – first published 1949), Delhi, 1965.

..... : *Akbar Nama*, English tr. H. Beveridge, 3Vols, first published, 1897-1921, rpt., Delhi, 1973-87.

Aurangzebe, Alamgir : *Ruqat-i-Alamgiri* or *Letters of Aurangzebe*, English Tr. Jamshid H. Bilimoria, B.A., Delhi, 2009.

Babur, Zahiruddin Muhammad : *Baburnama* or *Memoirs of Babur*, English tr. from the Original text by Annette Susannah Beveridge, 2Vols, New Delhi, 1922, rpt. 1979.

Badaoni, Abdul Qadir : *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh,* English tr. and ed. (Vol.1-George S.A. Ranking) and (Vol.2-W.H. Lowe), 2Vols, (reprint-first published, 1899), Delhi, 1973.

Barbosa, Duarte : *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, ed. and annotated by Mansel Longworth Dames, 1918-21, 2Vols, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, (rpt. 1989).

Begum, Gulbadan : *Humayun Nama,* Tr. Annette S. Beveridge, Delhi, First Published, 1902, Third rpt. 1996.

Bernier, Francois : *Travels in the Mogul Empire, 1656-68,* English tr. & ed. Archibald Constable and Vincent A. Smith, first published, 1934, Delhi, rpt., 1989.

Best, Thomas : *The Voyage of Thomas Best To the East Indies 1612-14*, ed. William Foster, London, 1934, New Delhi, rpt. 1997.

Bhakkari, Shaikh Farid : *The Dhakhirat-ul-Khwanin, (A Biographical Dictionary of Mughal Noblemen)*, Tr. Ziyauddin A. Desai, 3 Parts, Delhi, First Published 1993, rpt. 2009.

Bowrey, Thomas	:	A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal, 1669-1679, ed., R.C. Temple, Cambridge, 1905, New Delhi, 1993.
Burton, Richard Francis	:	Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Mecca, 2Vols, New Delhi, rpt., 1994.
Careri, J.F. Gemelli	:	A Voyage Round the World by Dr. John Francis Gemelli Careri, Part IIIrd, ed., Surendranath Sen, Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri, New Delhi, 1949.
Carre, Abbe	:	The Travels of Abbe Carre in India and the Near East, 1672-74, English tr. & ed., Lady Fawcett & Charles Fawcett, 2Vols, New Delhi, 1990.
Della Valle, Pietro	:	The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India, 1623-24, ed. Edward Grey, 2 Vols, London, 1892, New Delhi, rpt. 1991.
Della Valle, Pietro	:	Pietro's Pilgrimage. Wilfrid Blunt (ed.). James Barrie. London, 1953.
Foster, William (ed.)	:	Early Travels in India, 1583-1619, London, 1921, Delhi, 1999.
Fryer, John	:	A New Account of East India and Persia Being Nine Years' 1672-81, ed. William Crooke, 3 Vols., London, 1909, New Delhi, 1992.
Guerreiro, Father Fernao	:	Jahagir and the Jesuits, Tr. C.H. Payne, London, 1930.
Hedges, William	:	*The Diary of William Hedges, 1681-1687*, ed., R. Barlow and H. Yule, 3Vols, London, 1887-89.
Herbert, Thomas	:	*Some Years' Travels in Asia and Africa*, London, 1677.
Hamilton, Alexander	:	*A New Account of the East Indies, Being the Observations and Remarks of Captain Alexander Hamilton, 1688-1723*, ed., Sir William Foster, 2Vols, London, 1739, New Delhi, 1995.

Jarric, Du : *Akbar and the Jesuits*, Tr. with introduction and notes by C.H. Payne, London, 1926.

Jourdain, John : *The Journal of John Jourdain 1608-1617, Describing His Experiences in Arabia, India, And The Malay Archipelago*, ed. William Foster, Cambridge, 1905, New Delhi, rpt. 1992.

Jahangir, Nooruddin Muhammad : *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, English tr. and ed., A Rogers and H. Beveridge, 2 Vols, London, 1909-1914, Delhi, 1989.

Khan, Shahnawaz : *The Ma'athir-ul-Umara*, Trans. H. Beveridge & Baini Prashad, 2Vols, Patna, First rpt., 1979.

Laval, Francois Pyard : *The Voyage of Francois Pyard of Laval to the East Indies, The Maldives, The Moluccas and Brazil*, English tr. Albert Gray, (Assisted by H.C.P. Bell), 2Vols, London, 1887, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 2000.

Linschoten, J.H. Van : *The Voyage of John Huyghen Van Linschoten to the East Indies*, English tr. and ed., Vol. I. Arthur Coke Burnell, and Vol. II, P.A. Tiele, 2Vols, London, 1885, New Delhi, 1988.

Major, R.H. (ed.) : *India in the Fifteen Century*, Hakluyt Society, London, 1857, Deep Publications, Delhi, rpt., 1974.

Mandelslo, John Albert De : *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India (1638-1639)*, ed. M.S. Commissariat, London, 1931, New Delhi, 1995.

Manrique, Fray Sebastien : *Travels of Fray Sebastien Manrique, 1629-1643*, ed., C.E. Luard & Father H. Hosten, 2 Vols, London, 1926.

Manucci, Niccolao : *Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India 1653-1708*, English tr. & ed. William Irvine, 4 Vols., London, 1907, Delhi, rpt., 1990,

Marshall, John : *John Marshall in India – Notes and Observations in Bengal 1668-72*, (ed.), Shafaat Ahmad Khan, London,

1927.

Martin, Francois : *India in the 17th Century (Social, Economic and Political), Memoirs of Francois Martin (1670-1694)*, English tr. Lotika Varadarajan, 2Vols, Delhi, 1983.

Master, Streynsham : *The Diaries of Streynsham Master, (1675-1680)*, ed., R.C. Temple, 2Vols, London, 1911.

Monserrate, Father Antonio : *Mongolicae legationis Commentarius*, ed., John S. Hoyland (tr.) and S.N. Banerjee (annotator), Commentary of Father Monserrate, 1922, Asian Publishers, Jalandhar, 1993.

Mundy, Peter : *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667, Vol II, Travels in Asia, 1628-1634*, ed. R.C. Temple, 3Vols, London, 1914.

Nath, R (ed.) : *India as Seen by William Finch (1608-11)*, Jaipur, 1990.

Navarrete, Friar Domingo : *Travels and Controversies of Friar Domingo Navarrete 1618-1686*, ed. J.S. Cummings, 2 Vols., London, 1962.

Norris, William : *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb (1699-1702)*, ed., Harihar Das, Condensed and rearranged by S.C. Sarkar, Calcutta, 1959.

Oaten, E. F. : *European Travellers in India, During 15th, 16th and 17th Centuries*, Lucknow, 1974.

Ovington, John : *A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689 by J. Ovington*, ed., H.G. Rawlinson, London, 1929, New Delhi, rpt., 1994.

Pelsaert, Francisco : *The Remonstrantie*, English tr. W.H. Moreland and P. Geyl, Jahangir's India, Cambridge, 1925, New Delhi, rpt. 2001.

Polo, Marco : *The Travels of Marco Polo, (The Venetian)*, ed., Komroff Manuel, New York, 1926.

Purchas, Samuel : *Hakluyt Posthumus or Purchas his Pilgrimes,*

Contayning A History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and Others, 20 Vols., Glasgow, James MacLehose, 1905.

Roe, Thomas : *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615-1619,* ed. William Foster, 2Vols, New and Revised edition, London, 1926.

Roe Thomas and Fryer John : *Travel in India in the Seventeenth Century*, (reprinted in "The Calcutta Weekly Englishman" under the care of Talboys Wheeler), First published, London, 1873, New Delhi, 1993.

Reis, Sidi Ali : *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Sidi Ali Reis in India, Afghanistan, Central Asia and Persia, During the Years 1553-1556*, English tr. and ed., Arminius Vambery, London, 1899.

Sachau, Edward C. (ed.) : *Alberuni's India*, 2Vols, New Delhi, rpt., 1989.

Sewell, Robert : *A Forgotten Empire*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1924, First Indian Edition, 1962.

Tavernier, Jean-Baptiste : *Travels In India*, English tr. & ed. V. Ball and William Crooke, 2Vols, Delhi, rpt., 2000.

Thevenot, Jean de : *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, ed., Surendranath Sen, The National Archives of India, Queensway, New Delhi, 1949.

Varthema, Di Ludovico : *The Itinerary of Ludovico Di Varthema of Bologna from 1502 to 1508*, English tr. John Winter Jones, New Delhi, first published, 1863, rpt.1997.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DOCUMENTS, LETTERS, RECORDS OF CONVERSATION:

The English Factories in India (1618-1669), ed. William Foster, 13Vols, Oxford, 1906-27.

Letters Received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East (1602-17), ed. Frederick Charles Danvers, Vol.I & William Foster, Vols.(II-VI), 6Vols., London, 1896-1902.

SECONDARY SOURCES:

Books and Articles

Alam Muzaffar & Subramanyam Sanjay (eds.) : *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400-1800*, New Delhi, 2007

Ali, M. Athar : *The Apparatus of Empire, Awards of ranks, offices and titles to the Mughal nobility (1574-1658)*, Delhi, 1985.

Ansari, M.A. : *European Travellers Under the Mughals (1580-1627)*, Delhi, 1975.

------ : *Social Life of the Mughal Emperors (1526-1707)*, Allahabad, 1974.

------- : *"The Harem of the Great Mughals"*, Islamic Culture, Vol. XXXIV, January, 1960.

Anwar, Firdos : *Nobility Under the Mughals* (1628-1658), New Delhi, 2001.

Ashraf, K. M. : *"Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan"*, Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol1, 1935.

Bhattacharya, S.C. : *Some Aspects of Indian Society*, Calcutta, 1978.

Chatterjee, Indrani : *Gender, Slavery and Law in Colonial India*, New Delhi, 1999.

Chicherov, A. I. : *Economic Development in the 16th-18th Centuries*, Moscow, 1971.

Darbari, Neera : *Northern India Under Aurangzeb, Social And Economic Condition*, Meerut, 1998.

Dubois, A. J. A. : *Hindu, Customs, Manners and Ceremonies*, Oxford, 1906.

Duff, James Grant : *History of Mahrattas*, 3Vols, First published, 1863, Delhi, rpt., 1990.

Findley, Ellison Banks : *Nur Jahan, Empress of Mughall India*, New York/ Oxford, 1993.

Ghosal, U. C. : *The Struggle for Empire*, Bombay, 1966.

Griffiths, J : *Paintings in the Buddhist Caves of Ajanta*, 2Vols, London, 1898.

Habib, Irfan : *"The System of Bills Exchange (Hundi) in the Mughal Empire"*, PIHC, 33rd Session, ed. Satish Chandra, Muzaffarpur, 1972.

Havell, E. B. : *The History of Aryan Rule in India from the Earliest Times to the Death of Akbar*, London, 1918.

Husain, Afzal : *The Nobility Under Akbar and Jahangir, A Study of Family Groups*, New Delhi, 1999.

Husain, Yusuf : *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, 2nd ed., Bombay, 1962.

Husain, Iqbal : *"Hindu Shrines and Practices as Described by a Central Asian Travellers in the First Half of the 17th Century"*, ed., Irfan Habib in Medieval India I, Aligarh Muslim University, 1992.

Jaffar, S.M. : *Education in Muslim India, (1000-1800)*, Delhi, 1973.

---------- : *The Mughal Empire from Babar to Aurangzeb*, Delhi, 1936.

Joshi, Rita : *The Afghan Nobility and the Mughals (1526-1707)*, New Delhi, 1985.

Joshi, Varsha : *Polygamy and Purdah; Women and Society among Rajputs*, Jaipur, 1995.

Kaul, H. K. : *Travellers' India: An Anthology*, Delhi, 1980.

Laet, Joannes De : *The Empire of the Great Mogol*, Tr. J. S. Hoyland & S. N. Banerjee (annotated), New Delhi, First published, 1928, Second edition, 1974.

Lal, K.S. : *Mughal Harem*, New Delhi, 1988.

Law, N. N. : *Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan Rule*, London, 1916.

Mahalingam, T. V. : *Administration and Social Life Under the Vijayanagar*, Madras, 1975, 2 Parts.

Moreland, W. H. : *From Akbar to Aurangzeb, A Study in Indian Economic History*, New Delhi, (1923, rpt. 1972).

---------- : *India at the Death of Akbar, An Economic Study*, Delhi, (1920, rpt. 1990).

Moosvi, Shireen : *History of Civilization of Central Asia*, Chahryar Adle and Irfan Habib (eds.), Unesco Publishing House, 2003.

Naqvi, Hameeda Khatoon : *Urbanisation and Urban Centres under the Great Mughals, 1556-1707*, 2 Vols, Lucknow, 1972.

Nath, R : *Private Life of the Mughals of India, 1526-1803 A. D.*, New Delhi, 2005.

Ojha, Pran Nath : *North Indian Social Life During Mughal Period*, Delhi, 1975.

Pant, D : *The Commercial Policy of Moghals*, Delhi, rpt. 1978.

Prakash, Om : *The Dutch Factories in India 1617-1623, A Collection of Dutch East India Company documents pertaining to India*, New Delhi, 1984.

Prasad, Pushpa : *"Female Slavery in Thirteenth Century Gujarat Documents in the Lekhapaddhati"*, IHR, 1988-89, ed. Vivekanand Jha.

Qureshi, Ishtiaq Husain : *The Administration of Sultanate of Delhi*, 4th ed., Karachi, Pakistan, 1958.

Ramayya, N. Venkata : *Studies in the History of the Third Dynasty of Vijayanagar*, Madras, 1935.

Rawlinson, H. G. : *India: A Short Cultural History*, London, 1965.

Raychaudhary, Tapan : *'Inland Trade'. The Cambridge Economic History of India*, ed., Tapan Raychaudhary and Irfan Habib, 2 Vols, New Delhi, 1982.

Sahay, Binod Kumar : *Education and learning Under the Great Mughals 1526-1707 A. D.*, Bombay, 1968.

Saletore, B. A. : *Social and Political Life in Vijayanagar Empire (A. D. 1346-A. D. 1646)*, 2 Vols. Madras, 1934.

Sangar, Pramod : *Growth of the English Trade Under the Mughals*, Jalandhar, 1993.

Sangar, S. P. : *"Festivals in Mughal India"*, Panjab University

Research Bulletin, Vol. XIV, April, 1983.

Sarkar, J. N. : *History of Aurangzeb*, 5 Vols, Calcutta, 1973.

---------- : *Mughal Administration*, (Fourth Edition), Calcutta, 1952.

Sarkar, Jagdish Narayan : *Mughal Economy: Organisation and Working*, Calcutta, 1987.

Shah, K. T. : *The Splendour that was India; A Survey of Indian Culture and Civlization*, Bombay, 1930.

Sharma, Sri Ram : *Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors,* 3rd ed., New Delhi, 1940, 1962 & 1988.

Shujauddin Muhammad and Razia : *The Life and Times of Noor Jahan*, Lahore, 1967.

Srivastava, Ashirbadi Lal : *Medieval Indian Culture*, 2nd ed., Agra, 1964.

Thomas, P : *Hindu Religion, Customs and Ceremonies*, Bombay, 1971.

Tirmizi, S. A. I. (ed.) : *"Introduction" in Edicts from the Mughal Harem*, Delhi, 1979.

Watt, G. : *Commercial Products in India, being an abridgement of the dictionary of the Economic Products of India*, New Delhi, 1966.

Wheeler, J. Talboys & Macmillan M : *European Travellers in India*, Calcutta, 1956.

Yasin, Mohammad : *A Social History of Islamic India, 1605-1748*, Lucknow, 1958.